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Short Instructions

FOR THE

Sundays of the Year

By Rev. P. Baker

ENLARGED AND EDITED

BY

Rev. William T. Conklin

WITHDRAWN

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To Mary

THE IMMACULATE MOTHER OF GOD,
MY CONSOLATION IN AFFLICTION,
AND MY ADVOCATE ALWAYS, THIS
LITTLE VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED BY THE EDITOR.

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CONTENTS.

	PAGE
First Sunday of Advent	7
Second Sunday of Advent	12
Third Sunday of Advent	20
Fourth Sunday of Advent	28
Christmas Day	36
Sunday within the Octave of Christmas	46
Feast of the Epiphany	55
First Sunday after Epiphany	63
Second Sunday after Epiphany	73
Third Sunday after Epiphany	83
Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	92
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	101
Sixth Sunday after Epiphany	109
Septuagesima Sunday	117
Sexagesima Sunday	125
Quinquagesima Sunday	134
First Sunday of Lent	144
Second Sunday of Lent	151
Third Sunday of Lent	159
Fourth Sunday of Lent	166
Fifth Sunday of Lent, or Passion Sunday	174
Palm Sunday	182
Easter Sunday	193
First Sunday after Easter	201
Second Sunday after Easter	208

CONTENTS.

PAGE

Third Sunday after Easter..... 213
Fourth Sunday after Easter..... 219
Fifth Sunday after Easter..... 225
Sixth Sunday after Easter..... 232
Pentecost, or Whitsunday..... 237
First Sunday after Pentecost, or Trinity Sunday... 245
Second Sunday after Pentecost..... 251
Third Sunday after Pentecost..... 257
Fourth Sunday after Pentecost..... 263
Fifth Sunday after Pentecost..... 268
Sixth Sunday after Pentecost..... 274
Seventh Sunday after Pentecost..... 279
Eighth Sunday after Pentecost..... 283
Ninth Sunday after Pentecost..... 288
Tenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 294
Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost..... 298
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost..... 302
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 307
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 312
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 317
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 322
Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 328
Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 334
Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost..... 339
Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost..... 345
Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost..... 351
Twenty-second Sunday after Pentecost..... 357
Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost..... 363
Twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost..... 368

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* xxi. 25–33.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: There shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars: and upon the earth distress of nations, by reason of the confusion of the roaring of the sea and of the waves; men withering away for fear, and expectation of what shall come upon the whole world. For the powers of heaven shall be moved; and then they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with great power and majesty. But when these things begin to come to pass, look up, and lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand. And he spoke to them a similitude. See the fig tree, and all the trees: when they now shoot forth their fruit, you know that summer is nigh; so you also, when you shall see these things come to pass, know that the kingdom of God is at hand. Amen, I say to you, this generation shall not pass away, till all things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

INSTRUCTION.

Holy mother Church, wise beyond all human wisdom, inspired by her Divine Spouse and Founder, bids us this day meditate deeply on the word-picture painted by our Lord, in which he graphically depicts the events that are to precede and accompany that awful day commonly known as the day of the last judgment.

While the votaries of the world are preparing for the merry Christmastide, she bids us look down deep into our hearts, to learn if they would be fit dwelling-places for the Savior of mankind. She would have us look upon him to-day, not as the lowly Babe of Bethlehem, but as the Judge who shall judge justices, as the one to whom all, even our most secret sins are known, and from the rigors of whose justice none may hope to escape. She bids us prepare the way of the Lord. She tells us by the mouth of her ministers, that another ecclesiastical year begins to-day, and she would have each and every one of us take a retrospective glance at the past. The past has been our own, and how have we spent it? Have our lives been such, that the awful picture so graphically described in the gospel, can have no terror for us? In the past we have admired the Babe of Bethlehem for his humility. We have

often cried out, as did the Jews: Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One. That cry has been heard. The longing of our hearts has been satisfied. Christ, the Savior, has often left his heavenly abode, and has come down into our hearts, and has showered upon us countless graces and blessings. He has granted us health and strength with which to enjoy many a merry Christmas, but, ere another will have passed, we may be called upon to meet him, not as a lowly babe, but as the Son of man, coming in a cloud with great power and majesty, to demand from us a rigorous accounting of all our thoughts, words, deeds, and omissions.

And when you shall be judged, on which side of the Great Judge will you be placed? On the right, with those who are continually singing the praises of God? or, on the left, with those who with fear and trembling cry out: Ye mountains fall upon us, and hide us from the wrath of an offended God.

The thought that we may be on the left hand of God—amongst those who are to be damned for all eternity, seems to freeze our hearts with terror, and we almost instinctively close our eyes to shut out the awful picture. And, yet, we all know that as we live, so shall we die, that as the tree falls, so shall it lie. If, then, we have a dread of

the second coming of Christ, it is because of the sinfulness of our past lives. Sin is the one thing that makes judgment terrible. But this is the acceptable time—this is the day of salvation. The night is passed, the day is at hand. Let us therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and put on our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us rouse ourselves from the sleep of sin. Let us begin to prepare, for, the kingdom of God is at hand.

Yea, truly, is the kingdom of God at hand. In a few short weeks our Lord will be born again in the stable, but will he be born in your hearts? Are you not going to arouse from sleep? Will you not prepare in a fitting and becoming manner for the coming of the Savior? Will you not listen to the cry that he sends to you by the mouth of his accredited minister, and make at least one sacramental confession during this holy season, in order that you may meet him at his first coming? And, whilst preparing for his first coming, be not unmindful of the second, for at what hour you think not, the Son of man will come. Are you prepared to meet him? If he were to call you at this moment, would you be prepared to undergo his rigorous judgment? I fear that many of you, if you were to examine yourselves carefully, would say that you are not. If you would not wish to meet your Judge, it is because your souls are stained with sin. Penance,

and penance only, can make your souls pleasing in the sight of God, and so it behooves those who are at enmity with Christ, to do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

PRAYER.

My Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who didst for four thousand years prepare for thy first coming into the world, give me the grace to follow thy example, so that I may prepare during the holy Advent season, for thy coming at Christmas.

I fully realize, that the only reason that you deferred your coming into this world, was that mankind was not prepared for it, and I fear that I will not be prepared for your coming unless I do penance for my past transgressions My life, O, Lord, has been very much like that of the Jews of old. In the days of my youth, and health, and prosperity, I have wandered far from thee. I have turned a deaf ear to the warning cry of your spouse, the Church, as did the Jews to your Prophets and the Patriarchs. You have inundated my soul with choicest graces. You have done all in your power to recall me from my sinful ways, but heretofore I have been unheedful of your warnings. Touch my soul, O my Divine Savior, with thy all-saving grace. Cause me to heed the warning which our holy mother

Church reads for me this day. Fill my mind with the terrors of the last—that awful judgment, so that meditating upon its rigors I may be turned from my sinful ways, and may be brought back to the straight and narrow path which leads to heaven. Give me the grace to do penance for my sins; grace to feel that now is the acceptable time, the day of salvation. Help me by thy grace, so that when the Christmas day shall come, I may be able to sing with the heavenly choirs, which surround you in the lowly stable. Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth to men of good-will.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL.—*Matthew* xi. 2–10.

At that time: When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to him: Art thou he that art to come, or do we look for another? And Jesus making answer said to them: Go and relate to John what ye have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the gospel preached to them: and blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in me. And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitudes

concerning John: What went ye out into the desert to see? a reed shaken with the wind? But what went yet out to see? a man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. But what went ye out to see? a prophet? Yea, I tell you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

INSTRUCTION.

In concluding the testimony that he was giving concerning John, our Divine Savior said: For this is he of whom it is written: Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee.

A moments reflection will enable us to make a personal application of these words. A little thought will show us that God, by his Church—by his priests—by the voice of conscience through which he speaks to each and every one of us—by his grace by which he moves us to do good and avoid evil—by his countless holy inspirations—in divers ways, and in a wonderful manner—sends his angel before our face to prepare the way before us. And whither shall the way lead? To heaven; to the Beatific Vision; to the enjoyment of God forever and forever. By the

Scriptures, through which St. Paul assures us we may have hope; by his holy Church and her teachings through which Christ himself speaks to us; by our Guardian Angels, God points out to us the way we are to pursue if we would attain eternal life.

But there is none so blind as he who will not see: none so deaf as he who will not hear. Holy mother Church has held up for our imitation St. John the Baptist, crying out to us in the words of the Prophet: I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight his path. We have seen with our mind's eye the precursor of God, thin, wan, emaciated from his long fasting; we have seen him clothed, not in fine raiment, but in the coarsest of dress: we have heard his soul-piercing cry; but we have turned our eyes from him, we have hardened our hearts against his appeal to prepare the way of the Lord. By our conduct, might we not be compared to the notorious, the infamous Herod, who listened with pleasure to St. John, but obeyed him not? True it is that there is none of us as wicked as he, but in a sense do we not emulate his example? The Church has cried out to us year in and year out to do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand, but have we changed our lives for the better? Could not the words of holy Scripture

be applied to many of us: The perverse are hard to be corrected?

The testimony that Christ bore to St. John might be said to be a reward for the testimony which John had given of him. And what a lesson the conduct of the Savior should be for us. Here we see the Savior of mankind returning good for good. But was St. John an exception to this? Was not the testimony on the part of Christ but a repetition of many like testimonies? Had not God shown by his treatment of his chosen people that he was always willing to bear testimony to man's good acts, and to reward him liberally for them? But how differently mankind acts towards not only the Almighty, but towards their fellow-men. Recall the base ingratitude of the Jews, and does not their conduct show that man as a general rule rarely returns good for good. Consult your own experience, and what will you find? Will it not convince you that man is likely to be unmindful of any acts of kindness shown to him, but that he is likely to treasure up for years the thought of any injustice done to him, and to be ever ready to return evil for evil? As a rule, we forget nothing quicker than acts of kindness: we think not of past favors, but look for favors to come. We rarely thank the Almighty for his past graces, but are constantly asking him for future

favors. And so, too, in our conduct towards our fellow-men: Eaten bread is soon forgotten. We wish others to say nothing save what is good about us, but we are more inclined to speak ill than well of others. Let us then try to profit by the example of the Savior, and when occasion offers bear testimony in favor, not only of our friends, but even of our enemies, for charity covers a multitude of sins.

And when they went their way, Jesus began to say to the multitude concerning John: What went ye into the desert to see? A reed shaken with the wind? No, a thousand times, no. John was not a reed to be shaken by the wind, but rather, was a giant, majestic oak, towering high above his fellow-men in perfection and virtue; defying the storm of the incestuous Herod, and the lightning of the very devil himself. He withstood all the assaults made upon him by the devil, the world and the flesh. He was constant in season and out of season; never faltering, never wavering, but always following the commands of God. Ever ready when occasion required to denounce vice, even in high places, and to cry out: Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

But how differently do we act. How aptly the term reed could be applied to most of us. How inconstant in virtue are we: how wavering in

our good resolutions. The slightest temptation oftentimes tends to overthrow all our good resolutions. In this, the penitential season of Advent, we are wont to make good resolutions: we are resolved to give up that particular occasion of sin, to correct this pet vice. But, hardly are our resolutions formed when the devil tempts us, and like a reed shaken by the wind, we are turned from our good resolve. A boon companion notices that we are trying to lead a good life, and he scoffs at us; publicly ridicules us, and like a reed we bow to his superior will and depart from the narrow path which leads to glory and seek out the broad path which leads to eternal damnation. Would to God, that like John, we would be not weak reeds, but giant oaks, ready and willing to defy the assaults of the devil and his emissaries, who are oftentimes none other than our so-called friends.

But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Behold, they that are clothed in soft garments are in the houses of kings. And would that it were true that in this our day those clothed in soft garments were only in the palaces of kings. People in soft garments are now found in every station of life. Extravagance, not only in dress, but in our mode of living is daily on the increase. God alone knows how many of us who pose as good Christians—as practical Catholics—

sin by intemperance in eating and drinking. How many are irregular in their mode of life. Their maxim seems to be: Eat, drink and be merry, for to-morrow you die. How much better the world would be, how much happier we would be, if we would, albeit in a limited way, emulate the example of St. John, and lead good, practical Catholic lives, so that when Christ at the last day shall give testimony of us, he may say as he did of St. John, Behold, I send my angel before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee. And this way shall lead direct to the Beatific Vision which you shall enjoy as long as God shall be God.

PRAYER.

O, blessed St. John, who didst merit even in this world to be honored and praised by our Lord and Savior, pray to him for me that I may one day receive at his hands the reward which he has promised to all who do his will on earth. Pray to him for me that I may do penance during the holy Advent season; that I may begin to-day to prepare the way of the Lord, so that when he shall come into my heart, on Christmas morning he may find it a fit dwelling-place. Grant, O my divine Savior, that I, like St. John, may give testimony of thee. Not, indeed, as St. John did by preaching and by fasting, but by living a good

holy life in the state in which it has pleased thee to place me. Grant that by my conduct I may edify others, and thus help them to lead better lives. Instill in my heart a love of that poverty which characterized you while you were on earth. Eradicate from my heart all vain desires for worldly honors.

Give me the grace to be satisfied with my station in life so that I may not run after the false joys of the world nor hunger after the pomp and splendor of earthly courts. Enable me by thy grace to follow the example of St. John, so that I may do penance for my past transgressions. Though I cannot expect to equal him in humility or in the rigors of penances that he performed, I can by the power of thy grace practice what he so eloquently preached, and do at least a little penance. Though the world and its allurements have caused me to stray far from the path trodden by St. John, I am resolved henceforth to bring forth works worthy of penance, and to live a good life. And do thou, O my divine Savior, help me by thy grace to keep the good resolutions I have made. Send thy angel before my face to prepare thy way before me, so that imitating the example of St. John I may one day be brought to the enjoyment of the heavenly bliss.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL.—*St. John* i. 19–28.

And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent from Jerusalem priests and Levites to him, to ask him: Who art thou? And he confessed and he did not deny: and he confessed: I am not the Christ. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said: I am not? Art thou the prophet? And he answered: No. They said therefore unto him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, make straight the way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Isaias. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said to him: Why then dost thou baptize, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet? John answered them, saying: "I baptize with water; but there hath stood one in the midst of you, whom you know not. The same is he that shall come after me, who is preferred before me; the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to loose. These things were done in Bethania, beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

INSTRUCTION.

And they that were sent were of the Pharisees. Witness in this fact the inscrutable wisdom of God. See how he makes all things conform to his infinite designs. We all know that the Pharisees were far from God, although they had performed all the works prescribed by the Mosaic law. They were the chief exponents of the law, and yet they were displeasing to the Almighty. Why, then, did he elect that they of all the Jewish race should be the ones that were to give testimony of him? Why were they selected to go to John to ask him if he were the Christ, or Elias, or the prophet? Simply that they might by his answers be brought to a realizing sense of their position. That seeing the great humility of the precursor of the Messiah, they might take a lesson from him, and try to rid their hearts of the pride that was eating them, and driving them daily further and further from God. In his infinite mercy, the Almighty pitied them, and would have them realize how far they had drifted from his early teachings. In his mercy, he would recall them from the error of their ways, and show them that they must do penance, or they would all likewise perish. He would have them hear the Precursor cry out in his soul-piercing tones: Prepare ye the way of

the Lord: make straight his path. Had they but paid heed to the lesson that John taught them in the few words of the gospel, what misery they might have been saved. Had they listened to the words of the Angel that was sent before the face of the Messiah, they would have been saved the pain and the mortification, and the disgrace of later being likened to whited sepulchres: good to look upon without, but within masses of rottenness and corruption.

The Pharisees were learned in the Law. They were strict observers of the letter of the Law, but of the spirit they were unmindful. Their knowledge of the Law told them that the time was near at hand when the long-promised Messiah was to come. They had heard the teachings of John, and they had become alarmed. Alarmed at what? Alarmed at the thought that the Savior was in their midst, and they knew him not? No! Unfortunately, that was not the reason. The reason for their alarm was that a new teacher had sprung up, who was taking their followers from them. He was not of any of the schools that they recognized. He was not clothed as they were, in soft raiment. He did not affect the Synagogue at the times when it was most crowded. He did not say long prayers on the street corners, or in the places where men were wont to congregate. He did not pride him-

self on the fact that he was not as other men. In a word, he was not one of them: he was, in fact, a standing rebuke to them. Why, then, did they send to him? That it might be made known to them that he was the precursor of the Christ, and that he was preaching a doctrine of which they, despite their knowledge of the Law, were ignorant. They, in common with the others of their race, had been sending loud cries to heaven. The burden of their prayers for many years had been: Drop dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One. Let the earth open and bud forth the Savior.

And now that Savior was in the midst of them, and they knew him not. The Almighty had hidden himself from the proud, and had taken up his abode with the humble. He had rejected them, but in his mercy he would still recall them from the error of their ways, but they would not. Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand, was the cry that they had heard from John, but to his teachings they turned a deaf ear.

In the conduct of the Pharisees, witness the conduct of many of the so-called Christians of the 20th Century. See in their conduct the conduct of many of our lukewarm Catholics. Like them, the poor Catholics of to-day hear the voice of God crying out to them, but they heed

it not. If to-day you hear the voice of God, harden not your hearts, are words which are addressed to them, but they heed them not. They have been looking forward for the coming of the Christ, and in a few days he is to be born again, but will he be born in their hearts? Alas! the hearts of many will not be fit for Christ to be born in. And why? Because they, like the Pharisees of old, have turned a deaf ear to the cry of the Baptist: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his path. Year after year, Sunday after Sunday, for the two weeks of Advent that have passed they have been ex-exhorted to turn from their evil ways, and prepare for the coming of the Christ, but they would not. By the teachings of the Church, by the promptings of the Holy Spirit, and in countless other ways, they have been sent to John to ask: Who art thou?

And what has been the answer that John has given them? Is it the same as that which he gave to the Pharisees? No it is not. In many, if not in all cases, he has answered their question by repeating it and by asking them: Who art thou?

And that is the question that each and every one of us should try to answer to ourselves to-day. Who am I? What am I? Am I a better, a more holy man to-day than I was this time last

year? Have I grown better in the sight of God? Am I any nearer to him than I was at the last Advent season? If God were to send his messenger to me, and were to demand an accounting from me, what answer would I be able to give to that vital question, Who art thou? If one of our fellow-men were to ask us that question, would we like St. John answer it truly, and tell him just what manner of man we are? Would we make known in answer to that question all the faults, all the imperfections, not to say the sins that we have been guilty of for the past year, not to mention all that we have committed in a lifetime? Is there one amongst us who would be so humble as to tell just what we are? And if we did would we not have to answer that we were not like the Baptist, but unfortunately like the Pharisees? How many of us could answer the question: Who art thou, even to ourselves? How many of us, by a diligent examination of conscience can tell just what we are? How many of us mistake the appearance for the reality, even in our own individual cases, because we are blinded by self-love.

And of what avail will the appearance be if the reality be wanting? What will it avail us to stand well in the sight of men, if before God we are sinners? True it is that we may be able to deceive our fellow-men, and appear well before

them, but we cannot, and we will not deceive the Almighty. And if we can convince ourselves that we are good, how easily we might convince ourselves that we might be a great deal better. How we should shrink from the thought that the Almighty is to come into our hearts on Christmas day. How insignificant we are when compared to him, and not only to him but to his saints. Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; I am not worthy that thou shouldst come into my heart. Cleanse it: purify it: make it a fit dwelling-place for thee.

And then they said to him: Who art thou, that we may give an answer to them that sent us? What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord. And how that same voice, that same soul-piercing cry has been dinned into our ears for the past weeks. What has holy mother Church said to us, but the one thing: Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand? In season, and out of season she has been exhorting us to do penance. To go and show ourselves to the priest that he might be able to tell us who we are. She bids us turn from our evil ways, to do penance for our sins, so that we may escape the day of wrath. The voice of conscience has not been stilled in any one of us, but bids us ever and anon, make straight the way of

the Lord. Every important event in life, every calamity, every accident, every cross, every affliction cries out to us in the loudest possible way, make straight the way of the Lord.

It is not enough that we hear the words of St. John, we must also needs heed them. If in our case as in that of the Pharisees they fall on deaf ears, it would be better for us that they had never been uttered. We know that the Pharisees turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the Baptist, and we know what was the punishment meted out to them. We know that even in this life, the Christ had called them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, and blind leaders of the blind. We know that they died as they had lived—at enmity with God, and we know that a like fate will befall us if we prepare not the way of the Lord. At this particular time we may turn a deaf ear to the cry of the Church, but there will surely be a time when we will have to listen to it, and that time is sure to come to each and every one of us. At that dread hour, at the hour of death every man will have to answer that important question: Who art thou? And happy the man who can say that he is a friend of God: that by his life he has endeared himself to the Almighty. That he has sinned but that he has repented. That he has by his acts of penance prepared the way of the Lord, and if he has he may expect that the Lord in his

turn will prepare a way for him, and that way will lead him to the realms of eternal bliss.

PRAYER.

Grant, Oh, my God, that the words of this Gospel may sink deeply into my heart. Impress me with their importance for me as an individual. Cause me to be transported to the times of the Baptist and enable me to hear him cry out prepare ye the way of the Lord. Enable me by thy grace to do penance. Like the Pharisees I have often heard the words of John, but they have fallen on deaf ears. For the remaining days of the Advent season I wish to live a really penitential life. Help me by thy grace. Grant, O Lord, that I may be able to present myself to thy accredited minister the priest, and in answer to his question who art thou lay bare my soul to him. Enable me to see my soul, as thou dost see it and give me the necessary grace to do penance and amend my life.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* iii. 1–6.

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and Philip, his brother, tetrarch of Iturea, and the country

of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilinia, under the high priests Annas and Caiphas; the word of the Lord was made unto John, the son of Zachary, in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins; as it was written in the book of the sayings of Isaias the prophet; a voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled; and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight; and the rough ways plain; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

INSTRUCTION.

Prepare ye the way of the Lord. That has been the cry of mother Church for the past three weeks, and what has been the response to her appeal? Is there any great difference between the cry she has been sending forth, and that of the Precursor? Has she not been using his very words, trying as it were to touch the hearts of men with the same incentive for penance as did the one specially chosen for that work by the Almighty God himself? And as with the cry, so too with the response. Have we as Catholics responded to that appeal any more readily than did the Jews of old? May not the reproach of

St. John be applied in all its force to us, for in what are we better to-day than we were before we listened to the soul-stirring cry of the Baptist as voiced by holy mother Church? Have we as yet attempted to do any penance for the sins that we have committed? Have we as yet begun to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight his path? Have we as yet filled the valleys that are in our souls; have we razed the hills and the mountains of sin that have been raised there during the past year or since the time of our last confession; and if not, why not? Is it because we do not hear the words of the Precursor, or rather is it not because we have hardened our hearts against them. If to-day you hear the word of God, harden not your heart. The voice of God is ringing through the land, and what does it proclaim? In every place where the gospel of Christ is preached to-day the burden of the voice of God is: Do penance for the kingdom of God is at hand. In a short time the Almighty is to be born again, not in the stable, but spiritually in our hearts, and are they fit dwelling-places for him? Have we made the path to them straight so that God may enter therein? Let us examine ourselves on this point, and see how strictly the words of John apply to us.

And he came into the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remis-

sion of sins. The baptism of penance for the remission of sins, was the doctrine of John in the time of Christ, and it is the teaching of the Church in every age since that time. Without penance there can be no remission for sins, and unless they are remitted there can be no salvation. And in what does this baptism of penance consist? In a hearty contrition, an humble confession of sin, and satisfaction for the evil done.

In a hearty contrition. What one of you is so hardened that he will not have a hearty sorrow for any and all the sins that he may have committed if he but thinks for a moment on what is about to happen. The Almighty God is about to be born again and he sends heavenly messengers to us in the form of holy inspirations, the words of the gospel, and in countless other ways, and he tells us that he is anxious to come into our hearts; but he adds that he cannot and will not come while his enemy sin is a tenant there. Can we think of all that the good God has done for us, and all that he is even now doing for us, and still refuse to do penance for the sins that we have committed against him? If an earthly king were to send us the same message as we are now receiving from the King of kings would we not try our utmost to atone for any offences that we might have offered him? And if we would do that to an earthly king, why not do at least as

little for the King of Heaven? Let us then look into our hearts, and see the damage that sin has done there, and by sincere earnest contrition try to make amends for our past transgressions.

An humble confession of sin is also required if we would meet the Lord on Christmas day. Like the prodigal we have strayed far from our Father's house during the time since our last worthy confession, but like him, let us resolve that we will return to it, and say to the Father: Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee; I am not worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. That is all that is required from us in the matter of a good confession; that we tell the Almighty something that he already knows, and something that some of our friends also may know. Is there anything hard or impossible about the confession of sins? It was not hard to commit them, and we were not ashamed of God when doing it, and why should we be ashamed, or for the matter of that afraid to go to him in the person of his accredited minister, the priest, and tell him the exact state of our souls as we know them after a good, sincere examination of conscience. Surely that is not asking us much, when we consider that by so doing we are preparing for the visit of the Redeemer of Mankind. If you are physically ill, you quickly seek the aid of the physician;

when you are spiritually ill show at least as much concern for the state of your immortal soul, and seek the Physician of Souls, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and he will not only heal you and advise you, but will take up his abode with you, and give you every grace necessary for the future care of your soul.

And the firm purpose of amendment. Ah! that is the crucible in which we should and must try all the promises for reform that we make to the confessor. If we are not sincere in our resolve to amend our lives, what is the sense of going to confession, and telling God that we are going to be better men? If a child were to offend frequently and after repeated cautions committed the same offense, despite all the promises made to do better, would you not have good ground for questioning the sincerity of that child? If a prisoner, brought before the judge for sentence was told that sentence would be suspended if he would pledge himself to live an honest, upright life, but in a short time would be again before that same judge for a like offense, is there much probability that the judge would listen to his plea? There is not, and the same may be said of the man who goes to confession frequently, but who relapses into the same old sins. You are now preparing for the visit of your Sovereign, and everything should be made ready for that visit.

If there is one thing that would be at all displeasing to him, that one thing is sin, and it is therefore your bounden duty to rid yourself of sin, so that he may find your heart a fit dwelling-place.

And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Those words of the prophet have been realized, but we are now in a position to have them realized in our individual cases, for the Son of God is willing, nay, anxious to come and dwell in our hearts. All flesh saw the salvation of God at the time of the birth of Christ, and we, too, will see it in a few days if we have prepared faithfully and well during the Advent season. This coming may be likened to the first, but there will be a second coming of Christ, when he shall appear to us, not as a lowly babe, but as a God of might and power coming in the clouds to judge justices, and as we are preparing now for the first coming, so too shall we have prepared for the second. If we prepare worthily for the coming of Christ at Christmas we shall receive him with joy, and that joy will be but the forerunner of the joy we shall experience when at the day of the final judgment we shall appear before the tribunal of God to receive an everlasting reward for the short penance that we have done during the Advent season. Do penance, for the kingdom of God is at hand.

PRAYER.

Prepare my soul, O my God, for the worthy reception of thy Body and Blood on Christmas morn. Help me by thy grace to put into the practice of my daily life the admonition of thy holy Precursor. Do penance for the kingdom of God is at hand. By the sinfulness of my life I have wandered far from thee, and like the prodigal am no longer worthy to be called thy son, but mindful of the many promises that thou hast made, I come to thee with a spirit of childlike confidence and at thy crib ask pardon and forgiveness for all the offenses I have committed against thee. O, thou who didst vouchsafe to become a lowly babe for my sake, and to suffer torments for me, thou will certainly not refuse me when I ask with a contrite heart for the pardon of my sins. I am not worthy to be called thy child, but you will not look upon my past transgressions but rather on the firm purpose of amendment that I am now making. I feel only too keenly my own disgrace, and recognize only too well that my heart is filled with the mountains of sin, but by thy help I am going to become a better and a more loving and a more dutiful child. I am now realizing in my soul the effect of the preaching of St. John and I feel that I must do penance. Do thou help me by thy grace to confess my sins

and amend my life, and to so live for the few days between now and Christmas that my heart may be a fit dwelling-place for you, and when you do come to me, so inspire me by thy grace that I may live thenceforward a truly Christian life, so that I may be worthy to be called thy son, so that I may one day see the salvation that thou hast promised to all thy faithful followers, so that the coming Christmas may be but the forerunner of life eternal with thee in heaven.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

J. M. J.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* ii. 1–14.

And it came to pass, that in those days there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that the whole world should be enrolled. This enrolling was first made by Cyrinus, the Governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary his espoused wife, who was with child. And it came to pass, that when they were there, her days were accomplished, that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her first-born

son, and wrapped him up in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them at the inn. And there were in the same country shepherds watching, and keeping the night watches over their flock. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the brightness of God shone round about them; and they feared with a great fear. And the angel said to them: Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people: for, this day, is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David. And this shall be a sign unto you. You shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly army, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest; and on earth peace to men of good will.

C. INSTRUCTION.

I announce to you good tidings of great joy, that shall be to all the people, for this day is born to you a Savior who is Christ the Lord. The very reading of these words seems to cause us to pass in rapid review before our mind's eye many of the things spoken of in the gospel. In fancy we can almost see the shepherds watching the flock, and can almost imagine the feeling of consternation that must have overcome them as they listened to

the angelic messenger telling them that he had for them tidings of great joy. And although nearly two thousand years have elapsed since that time we feel certain that that same message is being addressed to us, albeit in an inaudible manner. We try to picture to ourselves the Savior born into the world and when we see that he is lying in a manger, surrounded only by his earthly parents, we are shocked at the thought that none of his creatures, none of the great ones of the earth, none from that vast multitude was so good as to call to do him reverence. What a flood of thought goes surging through our minds! How we are likely to condemn the Jews for their seeming want of respect for the new born Savior! We like to flatter ourselves that if we were alive at that time that we would have been at the manger to pay our tribute of respect, and love and honor to the new born king of the Jews, the long promised Messiah. The thought that a God is born in such a lowly place seems to be beyond our understanding. We cannot realize why it is that he who created heaven and earth and all things did not choose to be born in a palace specially built for him by the very angels. And yet a little thought will suffice to show us, that the place he selected was the most fitting for him. In that lowly place sin never had its abode, and that was something that could not be said

about other earthly habitations. Again, his life was to be one of humility, trials and sufferings and so it was meet that he should begin to suffer now, even at the very moment of his birth. And yet lowly as was the birth of Christ it was the signal for great joy, not only on earth, but also in heaven.

To the Eternal Father this was an occasion of great joy, for he now beholds that Son whom he had promised to the fallen Adam as a redeemer, undertaking the very first act in the drama of man's salvation. To the Divine Son himself it was a season of joy, for although it was but the beginning of the torments that he was ordained to endure, he felt that it was also the first step in the redemption of mankind, for which he had looked forward so long and earnestly. And to the Holy Ghost it was an occasion of joy, for he knew that by the life and sufferings of that lowly Babe mankind was destined to merit infinite graces and blessings.

And who can describe the feeling of mingled joy and sadness that must have possessed the heart of the Immaculate Mother of God. Joy at the thought that this day had been born of her flesh the Savior of the world—sadness at the thought that he was beginning even thus early to expiate for the sins of fallen man. But she is not alone in her joy to-day, for has not the angel de-

clared that this joy shall be for all the people? From Adam to the infant that was just born, and from that infant to the last man that shall be born into this world that heavenly messenger brought the tidings of great joy. Who can picture the joy that must have existed amongst the souls of the blessed when it was made known to them that the long promised Messiah was at last born into the world and that their time for enduring separation from God was rapidly drawing to a close.

The angels too were enjoying great joy this day, for did they not understand the meaning of the birth of the Savior. They had been created as ministering spirits, and no doubt part of that duty was to minister between God and man. Listen to the gladsome halleluiah of the ministering spirits! Hear the earth echo, even at this late day their song of gladness Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will.

But to man, sinful man, this lowly birth was the tidings of great joy. By this birth sin is to be removed and the grace of God is to take its place. Man is at last reconciled with heaven. He has at last been restored to his lost heritage. What a reason for joy is this! On this day begins the work that is to merit for all mankind the eternal salvation for which they were created, but which

they lost through sin. On this day the devil and his minions tremble with fear for they know that their Master is at last born into the world. Saints and sinners rejoice and are glad for on this day is born to them a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

But for us as individuals to-day should be the most joyous of all the year. True it is that Christ is not born again as he was in the lowly stable at Bethlehem, but he is born again on our altars and spiritually in the hearts of many of us. And for those of us who have been fortunate enough to receive him in the Eucharist this morning who can tell the joy we have felt. Who can describe the sense of ineffable happiness that seems to pervade our very being and brings to us the joy spoken of by the angel. Truly are we experiencing the force of the heavenly hymn of praise "Peace on earth to men of good will. We seem to be conscious of the fact that the lowly Babe of Bethlehem is in our hearts and that the same heavenly cohorts that sung his praises then are surrounding him whilst he is in those lowly hearts of ours, and are singing Glory to God in the highest.

And what shall we say to those who have not deigned to prepare for the birth of Christ. They have deplored the fact that he was born in a stable and yet they have not seen fit to garnish

and furbish their hearts that he might come to them to-day. Are they not in the same state as were many of the Jews who although Christ was born in their midst knew it not? Can he not say to them that he came to his own and that his own received him not? And what are they going to do? Are they going to let this day pass without making at least one serious effort to become reconciled with their God? Can they not understand that much of the suffering that he endured in the stable was caused by the inhumanity of man, and that they too are in a sense causing the Babe of Bethlehem to suffer? For all that he has done for man he asks but their hearts in return, and yet there are some who are so cold, so indifferent, so lukewarm, so careless, yea, even so sinful as to turn a deaf ear to that entreaty. They can hear the cries of the Infant; they know that the tears that he sheds are for them, and yet they can remain so stony-hearted as to refuse him succor in their hearts. If you have not as yet prepared for the birth of the Savior do so ere you leave this church, and by fervent acts of faith hope and love, accompanied by sincere contrition, so prepare your heart that the Babe of Bethlehem may be born therein, for only in that case will you realize the full import of the words of the gospel: Behold I bring you tidings of great joy a joy which will cause you to sing with the

angelic choir Glory to God is the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.

M. PRAYER. St A.

How often, oh, my God, hast thou recalled to my mind the circumstances of the birth of thine only begotten Son. From my earliest childhood to the present moment the bare thought of the Christmas time has had a wonderful influence over me. Even before I could understand the meaning of the day the recurrence of it ever exerted a subtle influence. And as in childhood so in youth, and even in age the thought of the Christmas day floods the mind with beautiful and inspiring thoughts. Who can dwell on the events of that day and still withhold from thee the praise that is thy due. Who can see the Infant in the manger and not think of all that he has merited at the hands of that Divine Babe and how poorly he has repaid him for even the sufferings that he endured in the stable? Who can see the Second Person of the Trinity as he is there with none but his earthly parents to honor him and fail to be moved by that spectacle? Many a time and oft have I thought of what I would have done for thee had I been present at the Bethlehem stable, and the words that I would have poured into thy infant ears. For have I not at such times convinced myself that I would

have been able to recognize my God even in that lowly form? And yet I who have so often thought of thee as the lowly Babe have often been unmindful of thee as the Almighty, the Infinite God. I have mourned and deplored the fact that I was not present at Bethlehem, and yet I have often left thee friendless and alone in the tabernacle. . . How often thou hast prompted me by thy grace to come to thee, and how often alas, have I turned a deaf ear to thy entreaty. How can I face thee, O my God when I think of the many, the countless times that I have been unmindful of thee. How can I dare to come to thee even on this thy natal day and offer thee this heart of mine which is even worse than the stable in which thou wert born, for, alas! it has often been tenanted by thy arch enemy the devil. But as I look upon thee wrapped in swaddling clothes, and recall the message of the angel, my courage returns to me and I say that I, like the shepherds, will come, and though I have no better gift to offer thee than my heart, will offer that to thee knowing full well that an humble and contrite heart thou wilt never despise. And do thou, most gentle Jesus, come to me and take up thy abode in my heart: inundate it with thy grace. Give me the particular grace that I may need most, but above all teach me to love thee for I wish but thee and nothing more.

Fill my heart with thy presence, and whilst thy blood goes coursing through my veins give me the power to speak to thee and to tell thee how I love thee.

And thou, O most Immaculate Mother of the Infant Jesus, and my mother, make intercession for me. Thou knowest my poverty and my weakness. Thou knowest that I have not always been as faithful to thy Son as I should have been, but thy mother's heart will not permit thee to leave my prayer unanswered. Pray to him for me. Make me as it were one of thy children, so that I may be united by bonds of true love and affection to thy adorable Son. Thou hast ever been my protectress, my model, my advocate. Do thou be now my mother, and pray to thy Divine Son for me. Remember the sufferings that thou didst undergo because of the neglect of the men of thy time, and do not let me fall into such an error. Bring me to thy Son, and there keep me. Point out to me the way that I should go if I expect to meet him. Obtain for me that true love of him which I should have even now, and help me to cleanse and purify my heart so that when thy Divine Son does deign to come to me he may find my heart a fit dwelling-place, that he may take up his abode therein, so that to-day may be for me a really merry Christmas, a season of great joy, in

which I may be able to sing with the heavenly choirs:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will."

M. St. J.

SUNDAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* ii. 33–40.

At that time: Joseph, and Mary the mother of Jesus, were wondering at the things spoken concerning him. And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary, his mother: Behold, he is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be opposed: and a sword shall pierce thine own soul, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser; she was far advanced in years, and had lived with her husband seven years from her virginity. And she was a widow until eighty-four years; and departed not from the temple, but, by fastings and prayers, worshipped night and day. Now she, at the same hour, coming in, gave praise to the Lord, and spake of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Israel. And after they had per-

formed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew, and became strong, full of wisdom: and the grace of God was with him.

INSTRUCTION.

The predictions made by Simeon and Anna, while they applied in a particular manner to our Lord and his blessed mother, seem to apply at least indirectly to us as individuals. That Christ was to be the sign that was to be contradicted, was proven at his death. And the sword that was to pierce his mother's heart entered therein up to the very hilt, and left a wound that time could not heal.

But, behold, this child is set for the ruin and the resurrection of many in Israel. How true was that prophecy, and how soon to be fulfilled! The life, doctrine and miracles of Christ were surely a sign—a sign pointing out the way to everlasting salvation—a sign proving beyond peradventure that he was the divinely sent Messiah. Many had believed in this sign, and had embraced the faith that he was teaching. But it was at the time of his passion and death that the sign was contradicted. At that time they seemed not only to deny what they had previously believed, but they put to death the teacher, the

miracle-worker at whose hands they had received so many benefits.

We shudder when we think of the cruelty of the Jews and at times find it hard to restrain our mental indignation against them, but a little thought will convince many of us that the prophecy applies almost as directly to us as it did to them. For, has not the Savior been set for our ruin and our resurrection? For our ruin, if, like so many others who should be good Catholics, we are unmindful of him, and careless of his interests: forgetting him and all that he has done for us, in our pursuit of earthly wealth and pleasures. For our resurrection, if we forsake the world and its allurements and take up our cross and follow him. He is set for our ruin, when at the time of our judgment he has to act as the Judge who must condemn us if our lives have merited eternal death; for our resurrection if we have merited the reward that he has promised to all his faithful followers. For our ruin if we receive him unworthily; for our resurrection if we receive him worthily in the sacrament of his love. In a word, for our ruin if we are leading bad and sinful lives; for our resurrection, if as good and practical Catholics we live according to his teachings, and keep the commandments that he has given us.

And now the practical question arises: Would

Christ be for our ruin or for our resurrection if at this very moment the grim destroyer were to take us for his own. Each and every one will have to answer that all-important question for himself. Your conscience will tell you whether you would be on the right or the left hand of God if he were to come to judge you this minute. Take heed then, of the prophecy, and try to make a personal application of it to your daily life. As the twig is inclined the tree grows; as you live so shall you die. If you live a bad life you will surely die a bad death. If you live according to the teachings of the Church, and the commandments of God you will die a good death. In the former case Christ will have been set for your ruin; in the latter for your resurrection. This is a terrible thought. Meditate on it and tremble. Think on the conduct of the Jews who had the Savior himself to instruct them. They listened with attention to him, and profited by his example, but they put him to death. He had been set for their resurrection, but by the perversity of their lives he was the cause of their ruin, for they rejected him and crucified him. So, too, with many of us. He is set for our resurrection, but owing to the sinfulness of our lives he may be the cause of our ruin. A few short days ago we were transported with joy at the thought that the Savior was born into the

world. Many of us allowed him to be born in our hearts, and he inundated us with his graces. But, alas, in the hearts of many he has no place to-day. He has been driven from them by his arch enemy, for many of us, going back to our usual mode life have committed our daily sins and thus have driven him forth. On Christmas day he was set for our resurrection, but, alas, to-day he would be for our ruin, if he were to call us before his judgment seat. How sad, how terrible it would be if the Savior who was set for our resurrection, should, owing to the sinfulness of our lives be forced to condemn us. He came to save us, not to damn us. Let us then try to conform to the graces he gives us daily so that by the sanctity of our lives it may be said of us that the Divine Child was set, not for our ruin, but for our resurrection.

And thy own soul a sword shall pierce. Even at the very moment that that prophecy was uttered it began to be fulfilled. For is it not reasonable to suppose that Mary understood it fully? And if she did how could she escape the first touch of that sword any more than later she could keep it from entering her very soul. Yes, Mary's heart was to be pierced with a seven-fold sword. This prophecy made known to her what was to take place on Good Friday, and the foreknowledge of that awful event was to be one of

the keenest sorrows that she was destined to endure. But she was not to be allowed to wait for that awful day to have the words of Simeon brought to her with all their force. A short time after she heard them they were recalled to her mind by the torture she must have endured while on the way to Egypt with the Child. How vividly they must have appeared to her when at the time the holy family went to be enrolled, and on going back to their own city they found the Child was not with them. Truly did she say to her son, that she and her spouse had sought him sorrowing. But the real sorrow, the sharpest sword did not enter her soul till the time, when in the providence of God, her son was to be put to death. Picture to yourself the agony that would be experienced by an indulgent loving mother if her wayward son were to be put to death as the result of many crimes. How she would suffer in mind and body. How her soul would be torn with anguish. But her sorrow might be lessened by the thought that terrible as was the punishment inflicted, awful as was the disgrace that would fall upon her, it was at least merited by the sins of her son. But in the case of Mary there was, there could be nothing to assuage her grief. Hers was not a wayward, a wicked son, but the most dutiful, the most loving, the best son ever born of woman. He was not

only her son, but the true and only Son of the Almighty. Imagine then, if you can, the agony that must have pierced her very soul. She who loved this son more than any mortal could possibly love a child, sees him put to an ignominious death, and not by his enemies, but by those who a short time before had proclaimed themselves his friends, and had met him with the loud cry of Hosannah to the Son of David. Truly was the heart of Mary torn with grief. Truly were the words of Simeon verified, for certainly has the sword pierced her heart.

Can we, then, hear this prophecy and not be forced to think that in a sense at least it applies to us. Can we not see that unless we are very guarded in our daily lives and walk in the path mapped out for us by the Savior, he will be set for our ruin rather than our resurrection. Or, can we as dutiful children of Mary look upon her as she stands weeping at the foot of the cross and fail to commiserate with her in her awful and terrible suffering. If we are her devoted children, as we all ought to be, then we cannot fail to have sorrow for her. We cannot close our ears to her plaintive cry, as looking upon her dead Savior she cries out, O ye who pass by the way, look and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow. Sorrow and pity are akin to love, and if we sorrow for the Blessed Virgin we will soon learn to love

her, and loving her we cannot fail to love her Son, and if we but love him the words of Simeon will come true in our case, and we can say that the Lord has been set not for our ruin but for our glorious resurrection.

PRAYER.

O, Immaculate Mother of God, who didst present in the temple the Lord of the temple, and didst hear the awful prophecy of Simeon, make intercession with him for me that I may become thy truly devoted son. Pray to him that I may lead such a holy life that I can say that the Lord is my resurrection, and my life. Cause me to think of thy sevenfold sorrows, so that meditating upon them I may understand that it was the sins of ungrateful men that caused them, and obtain for me the grace to avoid any and all things that may cause me to offend God and thus cause you such deep sorrow. Teach me to be thy loving child, so that I may appreciate you as my loving mother. And as the dutiful child always strives to avoid all that may annoy his mother and to do all that may be pleasing to her, so teach me to do what may be pleasing to you, for what will please you will be pleasing also to thy Divine Son. Obtain for me the grace to think from time to time on the awful tragedy of Calvary, and to see you as you knelt by the cross, suffering not for the

sins of your Son, not for your own, but my sins and the sins of countless others. Prompt me from time to time to go before the Tabernacle where with the eyes of faith I may see the Babe you presented in the temple. Obtain from him for me that I may from time to time receive him in the blessed sacrament. But above all take me for thy child. Thou didst care for the Infant Jesus. Thou didst teach him worldly wisdom, and in all things didst act as a most tender and loving mother towards him. Remember, O most sorrowful mother, that the agony that he endured and the sword that pierced thine own heart were suffered that I might be redeemed. Pray to him for me then that he may be set for my resurrection, and cause me to lead such a good, and pious life that I may merit to be called thy son, so that those with whom I may be thrown in daily contact may say of me as was said of your Divine Child, albeit in a limited manner: And the child grew, and waxed strong: full of wisdom: and the grace of God was in him.

Mater Dolorosa, Pray for me.

EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* ii. 1–12.

When Jesus therefore was born in Bethlehem of Juda, in the days of King Herod, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he that is born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and we are come to adore him. And King Herod, hearing this, was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And assembling together all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, he inquired of them where Christ should be born. But they said to him: In Bethlehem of Juda: for so it is written by the prophet: And thou, Bethlehem, the land of Juda; art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come forth the captain that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, calling the wise men, learned diligently of them the time of the star which appeared to them, and sending them into Bethlehem, said: Go, and diligently inquire after the Child: and when you have found him, bring me word again, that I also may come and adore him. Who, having heard the king, went their way: and behold, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, until it came and stood

over where the Child was. And, seeing the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And entering into the house, they found the Child with Mary, his mother: and falling down they adored him; and opening their treasures they offered him gifts, gold, frankincense, and myrrh. And having received an answer in sleep that they should not return to Herod, they went back another way into their own country.

INSTRUCTION.

Behold the manifestation of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on his formal entrance into this world. He had been heralded for many years, and was momentarily expected, but those to whom he had made known his coming were too engrossed in other affairs to pay any attention at all to his advent. The Jews for many years had been crying out that the heavens might open and send down the Just One: that the earth might open and bud forth the Savior, and now that their prayer was about to be answered they had turned far from God and were not worthy that he should manifest himself to them. True it is that the shepherds had been led to him by the voices of the heavenly choir, and that they had gone to him and had offered their homages to him, but where were the countless others that should have been at the birthplace of the Savior?

Where were the princes of the people, the men versed in the law, the rabbis and the scribes, and the others who had been looking forward so long and so anxiously for the birth of the new-born king of the Jews? Can it be that God had turned a deaf ear to the many prayers that they had sent up to him? Certainly not, for was he not born at the time and place that he had said he would be born in? Had Daniel not prophesied many years before, telling the time and the place of the birth of the Anointed One? Why, then, was it that the Jews were so unmindful of the event? It was because they did not understand the inscrutable ways of God! They had looked forward for the coming of the Christ, but they had expected him to come not as a lowly babe, but rather as a God of might and majesty, a ruler who was to make them the mightiest of all the peoples of the world, and therefore his coming was both a surprise and a disappointment to them. There was much in the circumstances of the birth of Christ which might have caused a doubt in the minds of the Jews, for they had drifted far from their early teachings, and their ideas of the Messiah had undergone a most radical change. It was not the Messiah of their fathers that they now expected, but rather one who was to be a great and powerful military ruler; one who would free them from the yoke

which now galled them, and would make of them a mighty and a warlike people. So radically had their notions of the Messiah changed that even the most learned of them could not recognize in this child in swaddling clothes the long-promised King.

But if there was room for doubt, there was also evidence sufficiently strong at least for all men of good-will. This evidence, which after all was nothing less than divine grace, differed in the individual case. For the lowly shepherds it came in the form of the angelic choir singing Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good-will. They had shown their good-will, and their ready correspondence to the grace of God, and had been to the crib to offer him their homage. The learned Jews had the sacred books, and, as events proved, they could, by studying them, tell where and when the Savior was to be born. But, alas for them, they did not know the day of the visitation, and Christ came unto his own, and his own received him not. They had the prophets and the holy writings, and had devoted all their time to the study of them, but because they had hardened their hearts against God, he called another race to be his chosen people. The men of the East, learned in the study of the stars, and instructed no doubt by the sacred writings of the Jews,

knew, too, the time of the coming of the new King, and made haste to adore him. True it is that they may have looked upon him as an earthly king, but because of their ready correspondence to the grace that God had given them, they and others like them were to be the especial friends of God. They had seen his star in the East, and had come to adore him.

And Herod said to them: Go, and diligently inquire after the Child: and when you have found him, bring me word again that I may come and adore him. How futile were the efforts of Herod to delude the Almighty God. As we well know he had no intention of adoring the new born king, but rather sought his life. He had in common with all the Jews heard of the coming of the Messiah, but so engrossed was he in the pursuit of personal preferment that he would have become even a deicide to further his own wicked ends. We have no Herods in this our day, but are there not many just as wicked as he? Are there not many, who would if they dared put to death the Christ and his followers? Men who have no thought for God or for man, and who seem to take an almost diabolical delight in denying and trying to get others to deny the very existence of God. Are such men one whit better than was Herod of old? They seem to be animated with the same spirit as he was, and

seem to try by every means within their power to destroy the influence of the very Redeemer who came that they might be saved.

The priests, learned in the law, were able to tell Herod the time and the place of the birth of the new born king. They even had the knowledge forced upon them by the questions of the wise-men and the king, and yet they would not pay their obeisance to the Messiah. Proud, stiff-necked, corrupt, they did not find it in their hearts to go out and meet the Messiah, and thus lost the high places for which they had been destined in the new dispensation.

The wise-men from the East, as soon as they had seen the star, gave up home and all other considerations that they might come and offer their gifts to the new-born King. And how amply they were repaid for the little sacrifices that they made. They not only saw the King, but held converse with him, and the ready correspondence with the graces that they then merited was for them the beginning of a new life.

And behold the star which they had seen, appeared to them. The light of grace which this star typified appears and disappears as did the star. Now it is clear as day in your soul; now dark as night. To-day we may feel that the grace of God is within us directing our every action; we feel that we are at peace with God and that he is

pleased with all the works that we are offering to him. To-morrow that feeling of peace and serenity may disappear and then we are in the slough of despond, feeling that nothing that we may do is meritorious in the sight of God. But even though the star of grace has disappeared from view, it is but hidden for a time and will make its appearance again, if like the Magi we make diligent inquiries, and in the time of our aridities seek the advice of those competent to instruct us, and above all be faithful to prayer, remembering that the door is only opened to him who knocks and that it is only he who seeks that finds. If through your own fault you have lost trace of your loving Savior, seek him diligently as did the Magi, through prayer and the sacraments and he will manifest himself to you, and then you can go and offer him your gifts. He will accept them from you, and the little sacrifices that you may have made in seeking him will be atoned for by the graces that you will receive at his hands.

And they went back another way to their own country. And so too should it be with us. Having once found Jesus would it not be the height of ingratitude to go back to his enemy and ours? We know too well the trials and the sufferings that we have endured while away from Christ, and it is the part of wisdom to do

what we can to escape them for the future. Having found him then in the sacrament of his love, let us by the goodness of our lives merit the grace of one day meeting him in heaven.

PRAYER.

Give me, O God, the grace to realize the importance of the favor thou hast bestowed on me in calling me to be a member of the true Church. Too often, alas, have I been unmindful of the graces thou hast bestowed upon me, and like the Jews of old, have I wandered far from thee. But ever and anon hast thou shown me the star; the star of grace which leads back to the true fold. Never let me wander from it more, but rather give me grace to follow the example of the wise men of the East, to seek thee out, and having found thee to offer thee my gifts, not of gold, frankincense and myrrh, but a contrite and undivided heart; a heart full of sorrow for the faults and sins of the past, and good resolutions for the future. If, in times past I have lost sight of the star of thy grace, and have not diligently sought it, but rather have gone after the flesh-pots, and the gratification of my own pleasures, now that I have found it again, give me the grace to do as the wise men did, go back to my own country by another route, so that I may escape the temptations that have made me fall. Lead

me by thy kindly light to see the error of my past life, and give me the assistance that I may need for the future to conform to thy graces, so that having found you in the crib, I may never lose you again but may have you ever before my mind, so that forming my life on the maxims that you have taught, I may one day see you, not as did the Magi, as a lowly babe, but as a God of might and power, surrounded by myriads of angels, and with them may sing forever, Glory to God in the highest.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* ii. 42–52.

And when he was twelve years old, they going up into Jerusalem, according to the custom of the feast, and having fulfilled the days, when they returned, the child Jesus remained in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not. And thinking that he was in the company, they came a day's journey, and sought him among their kinsfolks and acquaintance. And not finding him, they returned into Jerusalem, seeking him. And it came to pass, that, after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his

wisdom and his answers. And seeing him, they wondered. And his mother said to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And he said to them: How is it that you sought me? did you not know, that I must be about my father's business? And they understood not the word that he spoke unto them. And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them. And his mother kept all these words in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and men.

INSTRUCTION.

Before passing judgment on the chief event spoken of in this gospel, the loss of the child Jesus, it would be well for us to attend to the circumstances under which it happened. We all know that there were two gates leading from the city, and one was used by the men, and the other by the women, and that the children as a rule were allowed to flock together, or go with either parent according to the wishes of the parents themselves. With this thought in mind it is very easy for us to exculpate the earthly parents of the child Jesus from any blame which might attach to them for their carelessness—a carelessness which was more apparent than real. Joseph no doubt felt secure in the thought that the child

was with Mary, and she on her part felt safe in the thought that he was with his foster-father, and so the loss of the child was not discovered till the people came to the place where the different parties were to separate and each go his several way. What must have been the consternation of the parents of Jesus when they discovered that he was not with them, nor with his kinsfolks or brethren! We can only try to imagine the grief of Mary's heart, for we can not realize it. In fancy we can see her running wildly hither and yon, asking all who might know her son if they had any tidings of him. Joseph, a little more composed but still feeling most keenly his loss, goes about asking all who might give him any hope, if by chance they could give him any news of his son. At last when they are alone, with grief such as parents alone can appreciate, they determine to retrace their steps, hoping almost against hope, that they might meet him on the way. But they are doomed to disappointment; for they do not meet him, and what is sadder still they receive no encouragement in their search. They at last reach the city, and then their sorrow is only augmented, for go where they will they can get no tidings of their lost son. They have gone about amongst their friends; they have searched every place where they think they might possibly meet

him; they from time to time go to the temple to pray, to ask the assistance of his heavenly Father and theirs in their eager search for the lost child, but still all their efforts, all their prayers are in vain. Finally, on the third day, when they had in all probability given up hope of ever seeing him again, they go into the temple to pray, and to their great astonishment see their lost child sitting in the midst of the Doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions.

And his mother, more in sorrow than in anger, goes to him and in a voice filled with sweetness says to him: Son, why hast thou done so to us? Behold thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing. And now, attend to the answer he gives her! How is it that you sought me? did you not know that I must be about my Father's business? Loving and dutiful as he was, kind and generous as he was, he even now is willing to add to the grief that she has already suffered by the sharpness of the answer that he gives her. But did he hurt her sensitive soul, by his reply? Far from it, for though he seems to chide her, he simply recalls to her the fact that much as he loves her, he must place his Father's business above all earthly considerations, and that on this the very first favorable opportunity he must begin to teach the Jewish Doctors concerning the new doctrine that he has come on earth to pro-

mulgate. And though she did not then understand the word or the reasons of the Almighty she treasured them in her heart.

And now, what is the practical lesson that we are to derive from this incident in the early life of Christ? It is this: that if the earthly parents who knew full well the dignity of the child entrusted to their care and who guarded him accordingly, lost him through no fault of their own, that we, who at times are not as careful of him, and his teachings as we might be, are prone to lose him, and that like them we must seek him, sorrowing, and when we have found him, must take him to our hearts, and resolve for the future to guard him so jealously that neither life nor death, nor any thing else, will be able to separate us from our loving Savior.

When we have once received the Lord Jesus in Baptism we may be said to have him in our possession and should try to exercise the same care in keeping him as did his earthly parents. And once we have received him, there is one way and one way only that we may lose him, and that one way is through sin. When, knowingly and willingly we commit a mortal sin, we not only lose the Child Christ, but actually drive him from our hearts. But as with the earthly parents of Christ, so too with us. We have suffered a great loss, and go along in the even tenor

of our way little suspecting that the Child is no longer with us. Suddenly, the grace of God illumines our souls, and we realize that we no longer have the Child with us. If we are as devoted to him as we should be, we will follow the example of his parents and seek him diligently till we find him. And how are we to do that? They have given us the example, and as they have done so must we. They retraced their steps and so must we. They returned along the roads that they had just traveled and so must we. And how are we to do that? By a diligent examination of conscience, for in no other way can we discover where we have lost the Child. In this self-examination we will find how it is that the Child is not with us, and unfortunately for us we will not be able to console ourselves with the thought that we are blameless in the matter, for we shall see that it is by sin, and grievous mortal sin that we have lost our loving Lord and Master. And if we are what we should be, what sorrow that loss will cause us to endure. We will see that we have been unmindful of the trust that God has given us; that we have left a kind and indulgent master, and have taken service with his arch enemy. We will see that for the momentary gratification of some passion we have deserted the standard of Christ, and have lost him, and will never recover him unless

he by his graces moves us to seek him sorrowing. And, when by the grace of God we have sorrowed for our sins, we, like his earthly parents, must return to Jerusalem, that is to his holy Church, by the road of a firm purpose of amendment. We must be brought to a realizing sense of the deplorable state in which we have placed ourselves, and then must resolve that when we find the Christ we will never more separate ourselves from him. But that is not sufficient, for like the Child himself, we must go to the Doctors, not as he did for the purpose of instructing them, but rather to tell them the deplorable state of our souls and have them instruct us in the way we should seek Christ.

And now that we have found him we must spend days and days with him, trying as much as it is in our power to make amends for all the trouble that we may have caused him. We must take him down to our homes, to the homes that we have prepared for him in our hearts, and must treasure up the words that he may address to us, so that like him, we may grow in wisdom and grace before God and men.

The gospel tells us that he went down with them, and was subject to them. Think of it! The God of heaven and earth, subject to his earthly parents. What a wonderful condescension on the part of God. And yet, is that not

what he does for each and every one of us when we seek him and find him and take him to our hearts in holy Communion? Does he not become subject to us? Does he not give us every grace that we may ask for, provided that he sees that what we ask for is best for the affair of our eternal salvation? Does he not do even more than that, does he not give us his body, and blood, soul and divinity to be our supersubstantial food? And if he does all that and more for us, should we not at least seek him when we have lost him, and seek him where we are sure we shall find him in the tribunal of penance and in the sacrament of his love. Seek him and you shall find him and no matter how wicked you may have been the Lord God will come and take his abode in your soul, and you like him will grow in wisdom and grace before God and men.

PRAYER.

O, Mary, Mother of God and my mother in the order of grace, make intercession for me with thy Divine Son, and obtain for me the grace that I may find him, and never lose him more. By that sorrow which filled thy mother's soul, when you discovered your terrible loss, I beseech thee to pray for me so that I may obtain from the Almighty, the grace to know the loss that I sustain every time I wander from him. I know only too

well that I have wandered far from him. And not only once but nearly every day of my life. My loss seems to me at times to be such a natural one that I never appreciate what it really is to lose such a wonderful treasure. I have at times, it is true, tried to find my loving Savior, and have sought him as thou didst amid the Doctors in the temple, and at such times how well he has consoled me for my loss, and what extravagant promises I have made to him. I have pressed him to my bosom and with tears of joy have assured him that never again through any carelessness of mine would he be lost, but hardly have my old sinful ways and the allurements of the devil beckoned me on, when all unmindful of the graces I have received and the promises I have made, I have wandered far from him. Like a sheep have I strayed, going further and further each time from my loving Savior, and each time unmindful of him for a longer period, till at last there comes the time when I rarely if ever think of my terrible loss. I seem for the time being to be like an unnatural parent who would have little if any concern for the loss of the child of her bosom; but would depend on neighbors to return him to her. That seems at times to be my sad state and at such times I beseech you to pray to your Son, that he by his grace and his holy inspirations may lead me back to the path which would bring

me to him. You sought him sorrowing, and I as one of your wandering and erring children feel that in time you may seek me also, and that no matter where you may find me you will bring me to the feet of the patient Jesus. Mary, mother of God, pray for me now; pray for me at all times, but especially when I am in danger of wandering far from God. Your sorrow was but temporary and was turned into joy at the sight of your Son in the temple with the Doctors, but my sorrow will be an eternal one if you as my mother do not direct my steps to the tribunal of penance, where your Divine Son will address to me the all-consoling words: Go in peace, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. But it is not enough that I should seek him and find him, it is also necessary that I should keep him when he is found, and by your help I intend to do so. Obtain for me, then, the grace to treasure him up in my heart when I receive him in the Eucharist, so that I as your child, may as did Jesus of old, increase in wisdom and grace before God and men. Mary, mother of God, pray for me.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*John* ii, 1–11.

And the third day, there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee: and the mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited, and his disciples, to the marriage. And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. And Jesus saith to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee? my hour is not yet come. His mother saith to the waiters: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do ye. Now there were set there six water pots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three measures apiece. Jesus saith to them: Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And Jesus saith to them: Draw out now, and carry to the chief steward of the feast. And they carried it. And when the chief steward had tasted the water made wine, and knew not whence it was, but the waiters knew who had drawn the water; the chief steward calleth the bridegroom, and saith to him: Every man at first setteth forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse. But thou has kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did

Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.

INSTRUCTION.

As on a former occasion the Blessed Virgin had presented her Divine Son in the temple, so now she presents him to the world that he had come to redeem. Our Lord had not as yet taken his position in the world; in fact little if anything was known of him except what was known to his mother and his chosen disciples. And even at this time he could hardly be said to have chosen his disciples, for though the gospel mentions them as being at the wedding feast, they were not his followers in the sense that they afterwards were when later they became his chosen friends, but rather were undergoing the preliminary training which was to fit them for the arduous duties that they would be called upon to perform; in a word they were but beginning the training that was to make them fishers of men. Up to this time he had only selected Peter, Andrew, John, and Philip. He had, no doubt, told them of the mission that he was about to undertake, but as later events proved fully, they had to be strengthened if they were to become his true disciples, and bear willingly all the hardships that would sooner or later fall to the lot of each and every one of them. At the time mentioned, our Lord

was in Bethania, assisting, no doubt, at the baptism of St. John. It is a matter of belief with some that the marriage was that of a relative of his earthly parents, and it is but reasonable to suppose that some one of the vast crowds who had flocked to hear St. John would inform him of the coming nuptials. Or would it be too much to assume, since he was to work a miracle at the feast, that he knew of it, as he knew of all other things, as a matter of divine knowledge? Be the source of the information what it may, we find that he was at the wedding, and in the words of the gospel: This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee; and manifested his glory and his disciples believed in him.

And under what lowly circumstances did he perform his first miracle! As on the occasion of his birth, he gave us a lesson in humility, and presented himself to the poor and needy that they might be the first to come and adore him, so now, animated by a like spirit, he performs the first miracle for the poor and lowly. He did not wait for the time when he would be surrounded by a vast concourse of people, as so often happened in his public career; he does not wait till his reputation has been established as a great teacher, so that he would have attracted the people from the surrounding towns; he does not perform it for one of the great ones of earth;

but at the behest of his mother, and that, too, at a lowly wedding feast. A poor man, a relative, as has been said, of the Blessed Virgin, is celebrating his wedding—a wedding lasting two days instead of the usual seven-day feast, and yet the wine runs short. That fact alone will give us some idea of the poverty of the bridegroom, and should instill in us a love for God, who would condescend to do such a wonderful thing for one of the poorest of his creatures. What a sad commentary that is on the lives and the conduct of the great ones of earth, and even on the lives of many of us who profess to be followers of the Christ. How many of us would have graced such a wedding-feast with our presence, and how many of us would have had any concern at all for the discomfiture of the host? Not so with the Blessed Virgin and her Son. They not only attend the wedding, though far above the people in station, but seem to have a care for the creature comforts of the guests. And should we not take a lesson from their conduct and do all we can to make people happy and contented whenever opportunity offers?

And the wine failing, the mother of Jesus saith to him: They have no wine. Imagine, if you can, the feelings of the bridegroom when the steward informs him that his supply of wine is

exhausted. He feels that he will be disgraced in the eyes of his guests, and in his misery he goes to the Blessed Virgin seeking at her hands some little consolation, but never dreaming of what is about to happen. He is weighed down with sadness at a time when he should be supremely happy. How can he approach his other guests and tell them that there is no more wine, and that the feast must come to an abrupt end? What will they say? What will they think? These and countless other thoughts of a like nature must have come to him, and each, if possible, must have made him more miserable than the preceding ones. But Mary, the mother of Jesus is there, and with that tender solicitude which she has ever since evinced for her children, she makes intercession with her Son, and her prayer is heard, and the embarrassment of the host is relieved. Hardly has the information been given to her when she says to her Son: They have no wine. How gently, and yet how nicely she tells him of the need of the host, and at the same time without appearing to do so, asks him to supply his wants. She knows that it will require a miracle on the part of her Son to supply the deficiency; she knows, too, that it will be the beginning of a separation which will last all through his public ministry, and yet she is self-sacrificing enough, and generous enough to make

the request. Mark ye well, that it was not that our Lord should show his divine authority by a sign of his power; nor even that he might put his enemies, if he had any at that time, to shame; nor was it for the sake of gaining and strengthening his disciples and followers that this miracle was performed, but simply to show us the love that he bore for his mother, and the power and the influence that she then had and still wields over him. There was no apparent spiritual reason why he should change water into wine, but yet, like all his other public acts, he did this that he might bestow a certain reward, not only for these in whose interest it was done, but also for the good influence that it would have on all peoples in time to come.

And Jesus said to her: Woman, what is that to me and to thee. Woman! How harsh that term sounds to us, and yet we now know that it was a term of great respect, and who can doubt that it was uttered in tones of love such as none but the Son of God could use. Who can consider for even a brief moment that he wished to reproach her, when, a moment later, he performs his first miracle, and that, too, without any further request from her. What greater testimony of his love could he have given her than to anticipate the time of his public ministry, in order that he might answer her prayer? Her mother's instinct tells

her more plainly than any words could have done that he will perform even a miracle at her request; she seems to anticipate that he will say to her as Solomon said to his mother: My mother, ask; for I must not turn my face away. And, like the mother of Solomon, she seems to say to him: I desire one small petition of thee; do not put me to confusion. He answers her in words which show that he will not refuse her. He tells her that his hour has not yet come, but as a signal favor to her he will anticipate the time for his first miracle solely in response to her request.

And what valuable lessons we may draw from this incident not only in the matter of our daily lives, but also in those things which pertain to the affairs of our eternal salvation. We see here that Jesus did not refuse the request of his mother, and that he worked his first miracle for her. What, then, is more reasonable than to suppose that now that they are both in heaven he is still willing to do anything that she may ask him to do. And as she is our mother as well as his, is it not reasonable to suppose that she will do all in her power to help us, especially since in doing so she is adding to the accidental glory of her Son? In our daily lives there are special graces that we need from time to time, and yet we may never think of asking for them. We need special favors from the Almighty, and for one reason or

another we dare not, or at least do not approach him to make known our wants. Like the bridegroom in this gospel we will soon be put to shame and confusion, and is there none to save us from it? Is there none to make intercession with the Son of God that we may obtain the favor we stand so much in need of? Ah! yes, there is one who sees and knows our wants, and will sooner or later make them known to her Son. Like a good and careful mother she watches over us and even at times when we do not recognize our needs she sees them and makes provision for them. She seems to whisper to our souls as she did to the steward: Whatsoever he shall say to you, do you. And if like him we have faith in her, how fully that faith shall be rewarded, for then Jesus will perform miracles in our behalf, not miracles in the natural order, but in the supernatural, in the order of grace, for he will give us refreshment, not for our bodies but for our souls. It may be that many of you have been praying to the Blessed Virgin, and she has not answered your prayer, but in that case, may she not say to us, as her Son has said to her: My hour is not yet come. It may be that what we have been praying for is not what the Lord God may know is best for our souls, and for that reason he will not answer even the prayer of his mother in our behalf. When we

ask the Lord for favors from time to time and he seems to turn a deaf ear to all our entreaties should we not take courage from the answer that he gave his mother and feel that in his own good time, and not when we may consider is the proper time that all our prayers will be answered. If then we send up our petitions to the great white throne of God through his Immaculate Mother, we will receive an answer to them, for Mary who caused Christ to work his first miracle will storm heaven for us, and he will not turn his face from her but will speedily answer her prayers in our behalf.

PRAYER.

O, Mary, most tender-hearted Mother of God and my mother, pray to him for me that I may obtain through thy intercession the many graces of which I stand in need. Like the bridegroom in the gospel I am at times all unconscious of my sore needs, and like him I must come to you for assistance. As the loving and dutiful child approaches his earthly mother with a spirit of confidence that nothing can dispel, so do I in times of trouble and temptation go to thee, my mother and advocate. Many a time have I gone to thee with the request that thou wouldst make intercession for me with thy Divine Son and never yet hast thou failed me. If there have been times when

I did not go to you as quickly as I might have done, or should have done, it was not that I lacked the confidence to do so, but rather that I was unmindful of my own necessities. As the earthly mother foresees and at times provides for the wants of the child, and, that too, when the child cannot make known his wants, or is ignorant of them, so has it been with you, and not once but I might say all the time. Thou hast not only foreseen my spiritual need but with that tender care and watchful solicitude which has ever been one of thy chief glories thou hast provided for them. When the wine of divine grace has run short in my soul thou hast seen my needs and hast encouraged me to do all things that thy Divine Son might say to me. In my hours of need, in times of tribulation, when assailed by temptations thou hast ever been my sure refuge. Thy Divine Son worked his first miracle at your request and is constantly bestowing favors on thy devoted children for thy sweet sake. If in the past I seem to have been ungrateful, or even unmindful of the favors that he has bestowed on me, obtain from him for me that I may appreciate fully for the future all that he may do for me, and in return for the favors that you will obtain for me, I shall do all that I can to promote thy glory. Make intercession for me, for whatsoever thou askest of thy Son shall be

granted, for never has it been known that he refused thee anything. Immaculate Mother of God, and protectress of sinners, pray for me, and for all who have recourse to thee.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*Matthew* viii. 1–13.

AT that time, when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold a leper came and adored him saying: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus stretching forth his hand, touched him, saying: I will, be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith to him: See thou tell no man: but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them. And when he had entered into Capharnaum, there came to him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to him: I will come and heal him. And the centurion making answer, said: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man subject to authority, having under me soldiers;

and I say to this, Go, and he goeth, and to another, Come, and he cometh, and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. And Jesus hearing this marvelled; and said to them that followed him: Amen I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel. And I say to you that many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven: but the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into the exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion: Go, and as thou hast believed, so be it done to thee. And the servant was healed at the same hour.

INSTRUCTION.

And behold a leper came and adored him, saying: Lord if thou wilt thou canst make me clean. Behold the picture of the man who is suffering from the dread leprosy of sin! The description of the physical condition of that man would be too revolting, and so we pass over it in silence, simply saying that it was a disease which had baffled, and continues to baffle, all the efforts of the doctors to cure it. As in the case of the leper spoken of there was but one man who could cure it, so too, in the case of the man suffering from the dread leprosy of sin there is one, and

one only who can cure it, and that one is Christ Jesus the Lord. Let us then resolve that if we are tainted with sin to go to him as did the leper and say to him: Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean, and in our cases as in his he will say to us: I will; be thou made clean.

If we could but form some idea of the awful, the terrible torture that leprosy caused that poor unfortunate man, we could readily understand how gladly he conformed to the condition imposed upon him by our Lord, and how quickly and how joyously he went to show himself to the priest. To the man suffering from spiritual leprosy Christ gives the same injunction: Go, show thyself to the priest, and if he would realize his sad state he would willingly do so, and would hear the words of Christ spoken over him, and the joy which would fill his soul would cause him to resolve never to sin again.

Leprosy may be said to be a living death. Once contracted the sufferer became a social outcast, and could not be harbored by his relatives or friends, but had to go outside the walled city and at the approach of any one had to cry out, Unclean! Unclean! lest by contact with him they might be contaminated. Sin is a form of leprosy, for it causes the death of the soul, and he who suffers from it should cry out Unclean! Unclean! lest his very presence might cause

others to suffer the same sad fate. He should cry out to Christ who is continually passing near him to make him clean. Christ is near him at all times, ready and willing and anxious to hear his prayer. He will say to him: Go, and show thyself to the priest, and if he follows that advice he will present himself to the minister of God in the tribunal of penance, and will hear him say: Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee. And what a change shall come over the soul of that man! His soul which had just been a sink of rottenness and corruption, will if he has been sincere in his confession be made whiter than snow. That soul which was the dwelling place of the devil, will become the abode of the Almighty God, and will experience a joy which no man can take from it. Is there any one suffering from the leprosy of sin? Then let him, following the example of the man in the gospel, present himself to the only one who can perform a cure in his case. Let him arise from the sleep of death, and return to his Father's house from which he has long been an exile, and from an object of loathing become clean and pure in the sight of God and man.

And there came to him a centurion, saying: Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. Here is a lesson for every man whether he be saint or sinner.

The centurion spoken of was not a great potentate, but one in charge of a small detachment of soldiers. He was not of the household of the new faith that Christ was teaching, but no doubt had heard of him, and may have had some personal acquaintance with him. His servant was sick, and as he says was grievously tormented. Animated with a spirit of charity he goes to the Lord and asks him to perform a miracle, not for himself but for the servant. What a lesson for all of us! How many of us would have done as much for one who had little if any claim on us? In all probability very few. In a few words he asks the Lord to cure his servant, telling him of the nature of the disease, and feeling that he of all men will be able to cure it, and that too without even going near the patient. How many of us are animated with a like faith? How many of us even after we have experienced many signal favors at the hands of Christ would dare approach him and ask him with the same faith to cure one who was near and dear to us. We all have some one near and dear to us who at times is sick with the palsy caused by the many sins that we commit from time to time. And, unfortunately for us it is not always our servant, or even our friends and relatives who are sick, but our masters, our own individual, immortal souls, and even though we know it to be sick, do we like the centurion go

to Christ and ask that it be cured? How often has our master, our soul been sick, and though Jesus of Nazareth was passing by; passing by, by his inspirations, his graces, and in countless other ways, and how rarely, if ever, have we asked him to stop and perform a cure for us. Let us compare our conduct with that of the centurion and see who will suffer thereby.

And Jesus said: I will come and heal him. Imagine the consternation of the centurion when he heard the reply of the Savior! Words seem to fail him; he does not seem to know what to say in reply to such a signal favor, and in his embarrassment cries out: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my servant shall be healed. Oh, the depths of meaning in those words: oh, the world of faith contained therein! Simple though they be, what words compare with them in the expression of deep and heartfelt humility. What words of mortal man have been so often repeated by priests and people in all the ages of the Church. Every time the host is placed upon your tongue you cry out, and it is to be hoped in the same spirit of faith as did the centurion: Lord: I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

And Jesus said, behold, I have not found so

great faith in Israel. Could it be that Christ had not known the condition of soul of the centurion before he had asked him for this favor? Of a certainty not, for he knew all things; but by his words he wished to show the Jews that they had not only not appreciated the gifts that God had bestowed upon them with a lavish hand, but had actually neglected them. He wished to show them that although they had been called to the true faith and the centurion had not, that he and not they had the true faith which moveth mountains and obtains for its happy possessor the choicest gifts of God. He had been in their midst for some time, and had taught them by word and example, and yet they had not the same faith in him that this unbeliever had. And he rebukes them by telling them that he had not found such great faith in Israel. And unfortunately for many of us, are we not worthy of the same rebuke from the mouth of the Savior? Called to the one true faith, feeling in our heart of hearts that Christ is ever present in the tabernacle, we go on from day to day with our master, not our servant, grievously tormented with the leprosy of sin, and never think of asking the Lord to come and cure him. That servant trembled, yea, rather shook from head to foot, from morning till night, with no surcease from his sufferings;

unable to direct his steps, or to do anything for himself, he waited as patiently as he could, the only relief that he could expect, and that relief was death. Like him, we are subject to death if we do not receive a permanent cure, and there is but one that can cure us and save us, and let us, therefore, once we recognize that our souls are tainted with either the leprosy or palsy of sin, go to the Lord, and say to him in words of deepest faith: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean, and in a spirit of heartfelt humility add: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed, and the good and merciful Lord who cured the leper, and the servant of the centurion, will heal your soul, and you will experience a peace and tranquillity of soul, even in this world, that no man can take from you, and in the next you will sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

Too well, O God, do I see my own soul typified by the men mentioned in this gospel. Too often, alas, has my soul suffered from the dread leprosy of mortal sin, and blinded to my own sad state I have heard you pass by, and have never cried out to you to have pity on me and cure me.

But to-day I am resolved that I shall never incur such a dread penalty by any deliberate act of mine; but if I should be so unfortunate as to stray from thee again, and become an object of loathing to thee, do thou in thy infinite mercy animate me to cry out: Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. Many a time I have recognized that I was suffering from the leprosy of sin, and instead of seeking out the doctor of my soul, I have sought the company of those who have but aggravated my disease. I have shown myself, not to thy priest, but to my sinful companions, and all they have done for me has but added to the agony that I was enduring. But to-day I am going to show myself to the priest, that is to thee, in the tabernacle, and later to thy minister in the tribunal of penance, and fully hope to hear thee say to me: I will; be thou made clean. And once I have been made clean, I shall present myself to thee again, and shall then cry out in the words of the centurion: Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed, and once healed, I shall do all in my power to conform to the many graces that I know you will deign to grant me. I am not worthy that thou shouldst come to me. Nay, though my soul were as pure in thy sight as is the purest of the angelic host, I would still be

unworthy to receive thee, but since thou art good and gracious enough to come to me, I shall try with all the power at my command to cleanse and purify my soul, and by the help of thy grace shall keep it free from all sin, and shall do everything possible to avoid the occasion of sin for the future. Give me, O my God, a strong, a living faith, a faith like unto that of the centurion, so that I may merit to live a good and holy life, and at death merit to sit with thee in heaven, there to enjoy forever and forever the reward which thou hast promised to all thy faithful followers. My Jesus, mercy.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* viii. 23–27.

At that time: When Jesus had entered into the boat, his disciples followed him: and behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but he was asleep. And they came to him, and awaked him, saying: Lord save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you so fearful, O ye of little faith? Then rising up he commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm. But the men wondered, saying: What manner of man is this, for the winds and the sea obey him?

INSTRUCTION.

It might be well for us before proceeding to the consideration of this gospel, to recall to mind that Christ had just addressed a vast multitude of people, and that the effort must have left him more or less exhausted. He had just come down from the mountain side where he had delivered the sermon which in all probability has done more to change the conduct of men than any other one of his public utterances, for he had just delivered what is known to all the world as the Sermon on the Mount. And when we begin to try to realize the effect that sermon has had on the world at large, we can form some idea of the influence that it must have had on those who were fortunate enough to have heard it. They pressed Jesus on all sides, even now unwilling to lose sight of him for the briefest time. On the way to his home he had cured the leper, and the servant of the centurion. Going into the house of his chief apostle he cured the mother-in-law of Peter, and as the gospel tells us: When evening was come, they brought to him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word; and all that were sick he healed: that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the prophet Isaias, saying: He took our infirmities and bore our diseases. And Jesus seeing great

multitudes about him gave orders to pass over the water.

These then were the chief incidents that preceeded the events spoken of in to-day's gospel. Is it to be wondered at that Christ was tired, and that he slept even when the waves covered the boat? In fancy we can see that small boat with the Savior in the stern of it, sleeping the sleep which comes only to those who have labored long and hard. No doubt all was placid on the lake when he embarked, but in a short time thereafter the winds and the sea arose and threatened to engulf the frail craft, and the apostles and disciples cried out in terror: Lord save us, we perish. It seems almost incredible that men who had been following the sea all their lives should cry out to one whom they knew to be a carpenter, and therefore not acquainted with the sea to come to their assistance in their time of trouble. But the fact that they did so shows that they knew also that he was not an ordinary man, and their faith in him was such that they felt and believed that he could even still the waves, and thinking of nothing but their immediate danger they cry out to him, and he at once answers their prayers by stilling the tempest.

Behold in this a picture of the struggles of the ship of the Church which Christ came on earth to establish. Many a time must Peter have thought

of that storm at sea when the storms of persecution arose and threatened to engulf the newly established Church. And as in the days of Peter, so too, in the later days of the Church when she was assailed from every side, and there seemed to be nothing for her but destruction and shipwreck. But the voice that calmed the sea was ever and always ready to cry out against the waves of persecution, and Christ the founder of the Church has ever been at the helm, guiding her safely into port and will continue to do so, no matter how violently the storms may rage against her.

But it is not of the Church that we should think to-day but of our own individual selves. Like Peter and the others who were in that frail boat with Christ, we too are sailing on the troublous waters of life's ocean, and if we are not careful the storms will arise and engulf us, unless we cry out as did the apostles of old: Lord, save us, we perish. Let us examine our daily lives and see how strictly the gospel applies to us, and see if we too should not cry out, not once but many times each day: Lord save us, we perish.

On arising in the morning, many of us are so pressed for time that we leave our homes for our daily avocations without ever raising our hearts to God to thank him for the favors of the night, or to ask him for the grace that we may need during the day. Is that not an occasion when we

should cry out: Lord, save us, we perish? Not that I would have you understand that any one will perish simply because he neglects for a time his morning prayers, but is he not in danger of being engulfed by the waves of temptation that will surely assail him during the day. While at work he may be tempted in countless ways and at the time of every temptation should cry out, for the Lord is his protector and his strength and unless he comes to his assistance he will surely perish. The world is one of the chief sources of danger that we have to encounter, and that for the very good reason that siren-like it is ever attempting to lead us far from God. In the workshop, the counting-house, the office, in fact wherever men are gathered, there is always present the danger of temptation. Many there are who consider it the part of manhood to swear and to cause others to do so; others seem to think that it enhances them in the eyes of men to tell the lewd story or the ribald jest. These are all sources of temptation to us, and are really the times that we should cry out: Lord, save us; we perish. It may be that in our daily business we may be tempted to steal; that we may be assailed by impure thoughts or desires; that our sinful companions may strive to lead us to places that we feel in our hearts we should shun, for we know from experience that they are the occasion

of sin to us, and at such times also we should cry out or we will perish. In our intercourse with others we may have reason, or rather think we have, to give way to anger: we may see those about us whom we know to be dishonest, and yet in the eyes of the world they seem to be successful, and we feel that if opportunity offered that we too might take that which does not belong to us: we are poor and we envy the rich; or what seems still harder to bear we may have become reduced in circumstances, and we feel that our lot is very hard to bear: we do all we are able to do, and yet our families are almost destitute; we are in a sad state physically, and alas too often spiritually; in a word everything seems to go wrong with us, and we are almost tempted to despair, or what is still worse to fly in the face of Providence. These and countless other temptations may come to us and in our weakened spiritual state we are about to be engulfed by the waves, but we cry out: Lord save us, we perish, and if that short prayer is said with the same spirit of faith as it was when said by the apostles the answer will be just as speedy and just as certain.

Some will say I have experienced many trials and I have cried out to the Lord to save me and he has not heard me, but has turned a deaf ear to my prayer. If that be the case may we not be

amenable to the rebuke of St. James when he said, You ask and you receive not, because you ask amiss. "True it is that the Lord may be sleeping as he was in the case of the apostles, but if your prayer be heartfelt, and what you ask for is for the good of your soul your prayer will awaken him, and he will calm the waves and bring you safely into port. He did not still the waves at the first cry of the apostles: he slept on and on, and not till they were firmly convinced that there was no escape for them did he calm their fears and say: Peace, be still. He did that so they might be given a greater proof of his omnipotent power. He did not still the waves at the first cry of the apostles, lest perhaps they might not appreciate fully their danger, or the fact that they were saved only after they had given up all hope. And so too is it in the matter of our temptations. Apparently he is asleep, and does not hear our cry, but he will not allow us to be overcome, but will make issue with temptation, and will not even allow us to be tempted above our strength, but allows the storm to rage in our hearts so that we may see that it is stilled by his power, and not by our own unaided efforts. "But rising up he commanded the waves and there came a great calm. We have all experienced the great storm of temptation from time to time, and we have also experienced the great

calm; that calm which is the sign, and at the same time the reward of a good conscience. In our lives we may have been great sinners, but by the grace of God we are moved and at last make up our minds that we will seek our Savior in the tribunal of penance, and in the Sacrament of his love. At first the storm begins to rage all the more violently: the devil assails us with renewed energy; tells us of all the trouble we will have in making a good confession; that our sinful companions will deride us; that we will fall into the same old sins almost before we have had time to reform; that there is no hope for us here or hereafter and that it is but a mockery for us to go to the feet of Christ; he gives us countless reasons for not going to confession, but we cry out: Lord, save us, we perish, and Christ will still the waves for us; he will pardon us our sins; he will come to us and take up his abode with us, and our hearts will experience a joy which no man can take from us; a joy which will be a foretaste of what we shall enjoy when guided by the pilot of our souls we steer our hearts to the port of heaven.

PRAYER.

Lord, save us, we perish! How simple that prayer, and yet how great the reward that it obtained. Every day of my life, O Lord, am I in

the same sad straits as were the apostles, but unlike them I am unmindful of thy presence, and the waves of sin wash over me, and while they at times terrify me, rarely if ever do they cause me to cry out and ask thee to save me. From my earliest childhood I have been saying a like prayer to thee, and if it has not been answered, the fault is all mine, O God, for thou hast assured us that whatsoever we ask the Father in thy name will be granted to us. In my daily prayers I say give us this day our daily bread, and lead us not into temptation, but do I say that with the same fervor as did the apostles when they cried out: Lord, save us, we perish. And yet the prayer is different only in the words used. They were asking for a favor which none but God could give, and so it is with me whenever I send my petitions to thee. They were asking for temporal relief, and I too am forced to do the same every day of my life. In the temporal as well as in the spiritual affairs I am helpless unless thou comest to my assistance. Do thou aid me, and in times of trial, in times of temptation when the devil seems about to overcome me, give me the grace I need to cry out from my heart: Lord save us, we perish; so that I may lead such a holy life that I may merit one day to be with thee in heaven. Jesus! 130/10

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xiii. 24–30.

At that time: Jesus spoke this parable to the multitude, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. But while men were asleep his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat and went his away. And when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the goodman of the house coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence then hath it the cockle? And he said to them. An enemy hath done this. And the servants said to him: Wilt thou that we go and gather it up? And he said: No, lest perhaps gathering up the cockle, you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn.

INSTRUCTION.

Many and varied are the explanations given of this parable of our Lord, and one and all, they seem to refer in some way to the condition of the

Church as an organization rather than to the individuals who compose the Church. But it seems there is one sentence at least that every one may apply to himself, and that is the reply of the husbandman to the servants when he said: Suffer both to grow until the harvest, and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it into bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn. There seems to be but one explanation of that sentence, and that is that it refers to the day of the last, or the general judgment.

The field, then, is the world in general, such as we know it to be; that field where every man seems to be working out his eternal destiny according to his own notion of the eternal fitness of things. Here we see the good and the bad and the indifferent all pursuing the even tenor of their various ways, and the thought forces itself on us from time to time, why is it that God allows the good and the bad to live as we see them: why is it that apparently he allows the wicked to thrive, and the good, or those who appear to be the good men, the very salt of the earth, he seems to visit with affliction and sorrow? And in our wisdom we seem to say to him, as did the servants in the gospel, Didst thou not sow good seed in thy field, whence

then hath it the cockle? Or, in other words: Didst thou not create all men to be good, and didst thou not die for all; then how is it that so few are good and the many seem to be so bad, so thoroughly unmindful of you, and yet seem to thrive even more than those who are always and ever doing thy holy will? Why is it that thou dost not destroy them, and leave none but the good to inherit and enjoy this beautiful earth that thou didst make for them? And to all who speak thus to the Almighty he seems to reply: Suffer all to grow until the harvest, and then I will say: Gather up the bad and the wicked to burn for all eternity, but the good and the long-suffering, and the meek and lowly, gather into my heavenly abode, where they shall enjoy the presence of God forever and forever. This, then, is the salutary thought that the gospel seems to inculcate: that the day of the harvest is the day of the last, or general judgment, and that the cockles are the wicked who are to burn in hell fire for all eternity, and the wheat typifies the good who are to enjoy the Beatific Vision as long as God shall be God. Let us then consider briefly the chief events that are to take place on the day of the general judgment, and without drawing any fanciful or terrifying picture, let us appeal to our own reason, and from what we know of the conduct of court trials, try to pre-

sent ourselves at the bar of Divine Justice, and pronounce the sentence on ourselves that we think our past and present lives deserve, and if by any possibility we are forced to think that we should be with the wicked, let us pray the Almighty God for the grace to reform our lives, so that when that awful day comes we may not be bundled for the burning, but rather be invited by the householder to enter the mansion prepared for us, where eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.

In fancy, then, we can picture to ourselves the scene of the last judgment, and oh, what a terrible scene it is! The body, which has so long been separated from the soul, is by a miracle of God joined to it again. And oh, how sad, how terrible that meeting shall be if by any fault of ours we have been condemned to eternal death, but how happy it shall be if we have been faithful and have received the reward of the just.

Let us first consider the condition of the reprobate. Soul and body meet after a long separation, and what terrible charges one makes against the other. Then they shall see each other as they really are; the body, which has given the sinner so much forbidden pleasure,

shall now appear in all its loathsomeness, covered with the leprosy of sin. And the soul, which would be resplendent with the grace of God and vying in brightness with the noonday sun, shall appear as a black and hideous monster, from which the body will recoil in terror. But while the body and soul are engaged in crimination and recrimination, the Son of God appears clothed in all his majesty and accompanied by the twelve Apostles, ready to judge all mankind, and to mete out to them the strictest justice according to the lives they have lived. Then shall the wicked cry out in terror: then shall they call upon the mountains to fall on them, and hide them from the awful presence of the offended God; then shall they cry out to have the bottomless pits of hell open and swallow them, for they realize that they are not fit to stand in the presence of Deity even to be judged. But they have sinned publicly, and publicly they shall be judged. Then, and then only, will they be able to see mortal sin in all its enormity, and realize what an awful price they have paid for the gratification of their passions. The proud, the unjust, the lustful man, shall then see himself in all his hideousness, and not as he appeared before his sinful companions. He will see himself then as the Almighty sees him, and the sight will make him cry out in terror

and cause him to attempt to flee from the presence of God. But he knows that hell is to be his portion for all eternity, and terrible as it is, it is for him better than the presence of his Judge. But he will have to testify to the justice of the sentence that is to be meted out to him, and publicly must acknowledge that God has done all in his power to save him; but he would not be saved, and preferred his sinful life to that marked out by his Creator and Savior.

And when he is ready to depart, after the awful sentence, depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, has been pronounced, he is made to endure something which shall add to his torment all the time he shall be in hell. And what is that? What else can it be but the judgment of the blessed; those men whom he laughed to scorn when they were both on earth? There they come in long array, clothed in the garments of heaven, their faces shining as the sun, and singing the praises of God who redeemed them. To them the Almighty Judge turns, and says: Well done, you good and faithful servants. When I was hungry you gave me to eat; thirsty, you gave me to drink, etc. They cry out: When were you hungry, or thirsty, and when did we succor you? And God will tell them that every time they did a good action they did something not only for him but to him. Then, and then

only, shall they realize that every good work is rewarded by the Almighty. Then, and then only shall they realize that every prayer that they have ever uttered has been answered by the Almighty God, and, led by the Angelic Choir, they go to enjoy heavenly bliss for all eternity.

This is the outline that we can all fill in, and fill in according to the lives that we are now leading. We are either the cockle or the wheat If the former, we may expect nothing but the punishment that shall be meted out to all sinners and that is to be cast into hell for all eternity. If we are typified by the wheat, we shall enjoy happiness such as no pen can describe. And now the natural query is: What are we? Are we wheat or cockle? By our daily lives we shall be judged, and if they are not such as to merit for us a reward, let us pray for grace to amend our sinful ways, for as the tree falls so shall it lie, and as we live, so shall we die. If we live bad or wicked lives, we shall surely die bad deaths, and a bad death is but the forerunner of eternal misery and suffering. If, on the other hand, we are leading good and upright lives, we may rest assured that God shall reward us, and even though he seems to be unmindful of us now, he shall give testimony of us later, and shall give us a reward which shall be exceeding great. Let us all look into our hearts, and see

if on the final day the Judge shall say: Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, or, Come, ye faithful of my Father, and enjoy the kingdom prepared for you, and may the good God inspire us by his grace to lead such lives that in time and for eternity we may be worthy to be gathered into his barns.

PRAYER.

O, Jesus, judge of the living and the dead, thou hast said that at the end of the world: The Son of man shall send his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them that work iniquity. And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the just shine as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Grant, then, O, my loving Jesus, that I may be one of those destined to shine in the kingdom of the heavenly Father. Thou hast suffered and died that I might enter therein, and thou wilt not forsake me in the day of the awful judgment. By the sinfulness of my life I have merited to be cast into the furnace, but thy love for me has been so great that I have been snatched, as it were, from the very jaws of hell. I have been all too unmindful of the signal favors thou hast vouchsafed to me every day of my life, and have sought not thy honor and glory, but alas

too often the gratification of my own sinful desires. I have allowed the cockle of temptation to enter into my soul, and it has outgrown and choked all the graces and the good inspirations with which thou has inspired me. By my sinful life I have merited eternal death, but thy death is my hope. Thy death was for my salvation, and thy sufferings will not be in vain. To-day and always I am inspired to do thy holy will, and my every thought will be to please thee and to love thee. Help me, O my loving Jesus, to know thee as thou art: inspire me by thy grace to have thee ever before my mind: may my every thought be of thee, and all my actions for thee: enable me to keep the commandments thou hast given me, and to follow in thy footsteps, so that knowing and honoring and loving thee in this world, I may merit to be forever happy with thee in the next.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xiii. 31–35.

At that time: Jesus spake this parable to the multitudes: The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. Which is the least indeed of all seeds; but when it is grown up, it is greater

than all herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come, and dwell in the branches thereof. Another parable he spoke to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. All these things Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes: and without parables he did not speak to them; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

INSTRUCTION.

Jesus spoke in parables to the multitude and without parables he did not speak to them. And why did he pursue this course? Was it that he might confound and confuse his hearers, or was it that he might, by speaking to them in this mysterious manner teach them what might be for them and for us a valuable lesson? Jesus Christ came on earth not to confuse but to instruct the multitudes, and in his divine wisdom spoke to them in a manner which though it might appear strange to us was well understood in his day. True it is that at times his hearers and even his apostles did not fully understand the hidden meaning which he sought to convey, but when he spoke thus it was his custom to explain later

to his chosen followers what his meaning was. Why then did he speak in parables to the multitude on this particular occasion? It was as the gospel plainly tells us that he might utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. But there was, there must have been another reason for his manner of speech. And what was that reason think you? It was no doubt to show that there was a reason in the mind of God for keeping certain things hidden from his creatures, and for enveloping still other things that he saw fit to reveal, in the deepest mystery which even the profoundest of the philosophers could not penetrate.

The inability of the people to fully understand the parables of our divine Lord must make us think of our own intellectual weakness when we try to comprehend the mysteries that God has revealed to us. In every age men have been found who by their unaided reason have tried to penetrate the mysteries, not only of nature, but of the very Creator himself. And what a dismal failure even the greatest of created intellects has proven to be when unaided by the grace of God. How the philosophers of old have speculated on the mysteries of the present and the future life, and how little they really knew! And as with the philosophers of the olden time, so too with the wise men, so-called of this our day. How often do we

read and often hear of men speculating on the profoundest mysteries of revealed religion, and alas, how often do we hear them say that because they cannot fathom them, nor understand them they will not believe them. The child who is just learning his catechism is oftentimes more learned in the mysterious ways of God than the man who is forever vaunting his superior intelligence, and proclaiming that he will not believe what he cannot understand. How little such men can believe then, for how little after all can even the brightest and the brainiest of them understand. How much better for such men were they imbued with the spirit of true humility so that they from their hearts could say: Though I cannot understand these mysteries, still I believe them for they have been revealed by him of whom it is said, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world.

And he spoke to them the parable of the mustard seed. What a salutary, what a valuable lesson we as members of the Church of Christ and as individuals might take from this parable. We all can understand how this saying of the Savior applies to the Church: how the little grain of mustard seed by its very insignificance typifies the Church which Christ came to establish. Small in its beginning it has grown in time to such a tree that men from all climes and of every

degree of intelligence may find safe refuge in its branches. The pungency of its doctrines has acted as a healing antidote for all the heresies and false teachings that have sprung up in the world from time to time. We can all see the reference to the Church in this parable, but how many of us ever stop to think of the very particular lesson it should convey to us? The smallest seed brings forth the greatest fruit—becomes in time the great tree. Can we not apply this to our daily lives? Every habit that we have become addicted to, whether it be a good or bad one, was like the mustard seed at one time, very small and insignificant. Our good habits like our bad grow on us imperceptibly. How much good then might come from the good actions that we perform daily, even hourly, if we would but do them with a good motive. How much each and every one of us might do in our own particular sphere for the sake of Christ if we would but try to convince others not only by our words but by our example how easy and how pleasant it is to do good works. The mother in her home, the father in the workshop, the banker in his counting-room, the priest in the pulpit, all may be likened to the grain of mustard seed if they but do the work that God has called them to, for by their good lives they become the trees in which others may come to find the only source

of real happiness in this world—the peace which can come only from a good conscience and the consciousness of good works worthily done.

But the mustard-seed may be said to typify another phase in the lives of many men. No man, no matter how depraved or how wicked he may be, ever became wicked at once. His badness is in almost every case the result of bad actions frequently done. How many sinners after a life spent in the service of the devil, can look back to the time when they first committed the sin which now has them so completely ensnared, and can remember the fear which overcame them almost at the first time they committed that sin! It may be that it was a sin of thought. They banished that instantly by having recourse to prayer. It returned, and, animated by a spirit of curiosity, or rather by the subtle influence of the devil, they dwelt on the thought—they took pleasure in it—they had bad desires—they finally committed the sin in act. Is that not the history of the fall of many who are now great sinners? The little mustard seed of temptation, nurtured and watered by the malice of the devil, becomes the great sin of their daily lives; the sin which, unless repented for, will separate them forever from the Almighty God. In the case of the sinner, sin becomes a habit, habit necessity, necessity spiritual death.

Despise not the mustard seed of temptation, but rather resist beginnings, for all too late the cure when ills have gathered strength by long delay. Overcome the little temptation by the little prayer fervently said, and overcome sin of all kinds by the thought of your dying Jesus on the cross.

PRAYER.

Oh, my dearest Jesus, what a beautiful and salutary lesson hast thou taught us in the parables which thou vouchsafed to speak to the multitudes. Truly was it said of thee by the prophet: I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world. Thou hast taught us many things that have been hidden from the foundation of the world. Thou hast made known to us many things concerning which the minds of the greatest philosophers could but speculate. Many things didst thou teach us in the many parables that thou didst address to the multitudes, but thou hast taught us even more clearly by thy very life when on earth. If the parables were designed to point out to us some religious truth, how much the more wast thy life designed for that purpose. Who can read thy life, particularly the early days of it, and the hidden life which thou didst lead, without seeing in the parables of this day a reference thereto? Can any one compare

thy life to anything but the mustard seed or the leaven spoken of in this day's gospel? What could have been smaller or more insignificant than thy beginning on earth, and what could have been more productive of good? From the Little Babe of Bethlehem to the God crucified and dying on the cross! What a grand, what a wonderful growth do we here witness. And again, as the leaven ferments and penetrates the whole mass of flour, so too has thy teaching penetrated and perfected the whole of mankind. Teach us, then, O Divine Jesus, to be like thee, small and insignificant in the eyes of the world, so that one day we may appear before thee and be worthy to be called thy disciples. Teach us that the little grain of humility that we should have in ourselves, if properly nurtured from day to day by our prayers, may one day blossom to the big tree on which we may rest till thou dost see fit to call us to our everlasting reward. Teach us that without humility we cannot expect to be pleasing in thy sight, and that unless we are meek and humble thou wilt not receive us. Teach us, also, that it is the little temptation that we hardly deign to notice that oftentimes develops into the sin that may cause our eternal ruin. Teach us that life is made up of little things, and that it is the little things that we do, or at times neglect to do, that are going to count

so much in the matter of our eternal salvation. Teach us to follow thy example, and to regulate our lives by the parables that thou didst address to us, and then we may one day understand them fully, for we shall be taught their hidden meaning when we shall meet thee in heaven. Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine.

SEPTUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* XX. 1–16.

At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a householder, who went early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard. And having agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And going out about the third hour, he saw others standing in the marketplace idle. And he said to them: Go you also into my vineyard, and I will give you what shall be just. And they went their way. And again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did in like manner. But about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing, and he saith to them: Why stand you here all the day idle? They say to him: Because no man hath hired us. He saith to them:

Go you also into my vineyard. And when evening was come, the lord of the vineyard saith to his steward: Call the laborers and pay them their hire, beginning from the last even to the first. When therefore, they were come, that came about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first also came, they thought that they should receive more: and they also received every man a penny. And receiving it they murmured against the master of the house saying: These last have worked but one hour, and thou hast made them equal to us, that have borne the burden of the day and the heats. But he answering said to one of them: Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way: I will also give to this last even as to thee. Or, isit not lawful for me to do what I will? Is thy eye evil, because I am good? So shall the last be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few chosen.

INSTRUCTION.

For the better understanding of this parable it would be well to recall to mind the question of St. Peter, shortly after the dialogue between Christ and the young man: Behold we have left all things and have followed thee: what therefore, shall we have? To this query of the Chief

of the Apostles, Christ had said: And every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall possess life everlasting.

Many are the explanations given of this parable. Indeed, it is one that has caused the commentators no end of trouble, for each succeeding age seems to have a different interpretation for it. Some there are who see in it the penny as the solution of the whole difficulty, and say that it points to an equality of reward in the kingdom of God. Others say that the parable shows that God does not regard the length of time that men labor in his service, but the fidelity with which they work once they have engaged to serve him. Still others apply it to the Jews, and say that the various hours mentioned signify the various calls that they as a nation received from the Almighty: from Adam, to Moses: under David and the kings: Christ and later his apostles. Many others there are who say this parable may be made to apply to the present generation, and not only to man as a race but to us as individuals. And it is this last interpretation that we should make of it, and try to apply the lessons to be derived therefrom to the betterment of our individual lives.

Let us then to-day, try to make a personal ap-

plication of it, and see that it applies most strictly to us. We were called, then, at the first hour, and that too, through no merit of our own, but through the gratuitous gift of God. Well might he say to us: You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, for at the first hour or at the time of our baptism, when we were called to labor in the vineyard of the Lord, we had nothing, absolutely nothing to say in the matter, and were selected from many who might have been much more deserving, by God himself. That, then, was the first hour and how many of us have been faithful laborers since that time? How many of us could truthfully say that we have borne the burdens of the day and the heats, in the sense that we have always done what we should have done in the service of God? How many of us have been faithful in the sense that we did not depart from the vineyard by mortal sin, and thus leave for the time being, at least, the service of that kind and indulgent Master, who had hired us?

The second call may be said to be the time when the Almighty called us for the first time to receive him in our hearts in Holy Communion! How well we can all remember that call! How faithful we were to it, and how gladly we entered into the service of the Lord. Can we not recall the many promises that we then made? We had

been prepared most carefully, and in a sense at least understood the dignity that was about to be conferred on us. We understood that we were entering the service of God, and we made him many promises, but how have they been kept? Have we worked as faithfully as we should have done? Have we worked for him and for him alone, or does our conscience not tell us that after this second call we have many a time left his service and engaged with his arch enemy? Yea, many of us have been working for the Lord but a short time when we have tired of his service and by the sinfulness of our lives entered the employ of the devil and the world.

But at the sixth and the ninth hour he goes out to the marketplace again, and in many ways recalls those who have left his service, or engages those who may not have entered it. And how does he do this? In countless ways and in divers manners. By the promptings of our conscience, by his special graces, in times of missions, perhaps at the death of a friend; in times of great calamity, or the sudden death of many people; in any of the countless ways whereby he causes men to think of their last end and the present state of their immortal souls. These are the calls that he gives at the sixth and the ninth hours, and how many times have we heard them, and how many times have we turned

a deaf ear to them? There is not one of us who has not been called in one or more of the ways mentioned, and yet we would be inclined to say, if the Lord were to send his messenger to ask us why we stand all the day idle, that it is because no man hath hired us, but would that be a truthful answer? We who have been called many times could not answer thus, and if we did the Lord would not be satisfied with it.

But there is to be another call, the one that takes place at the eleventh hour, and that is at the time of death. Is there any one so calloused as to await that call? Can any one feel that that is the call he is going to heed, and if yes, what assurance has he that he is going to get it? True it is that many have been called at that time, and have responded to the call, but does it follow that we are to be among that number? May it not happen, that we who have been called at the first, the third and the sixth, and even at the ninth hour, and have not heeded any of those calls, may be passed over at the time of the eleventh hour call, and if yes, what is to be our fate? There is no necessity for answering that question, for the answer is well known to all.

Many are called, but few are chosen. Many are called! May we not say that all are called? God has given us commandments, and to many, yea, to all does he give the grace to keep them,

and thus receive the reward at the hands of the Master. Many are called; called at baptism, called later in life to the true Church; called early or late to a position in the Church; to the religious life. All these are vineyards, and you will be rewarded according to the fervor with which you have worked, or in other words you will be paid for any effort that you have made for the benefit of your everlasting soul.

But few are chosen! And why? Because oftentimes they will not come when called. How many times has God called us by his very special graces, but while he is calling, the world, or the devil offers some attraction and we follow it. Others there are who though called will not be chosen, for though they are in the vineyard of the Lord, they are drones and not faithful laborers, and for that reason will not receive the penny of eternal reward when the steward comes to pay the laborers their hire. Others still find the work irksome and leave the vineyard, and will not be present in the evening, or the day of the final reckoning to receive their reward, but must needs look for it from some other employer, and that will be the one for whom they have labored during the day of their mortal lives.

Many are called, but few are chosen. We are certain that we are among those who have been called. Let us by our lives try to make certain

that we shall be amongst the chosen so that in the evening of life we may receive from the Master that which shall be just.

PRAYER.

You have called me, O my God, into the vineyard of the Holy Catholic Church where I may, if I so will, cultivate my soul so that when the evening of life shall come, I may hear you say to me, Well done thou good and faithful servant.

True it is that I have not left father, and mother, or houses and lands for thy sake: true it is that I have made little if any sacrifice for thee, and yet I believe that since you have been gracious enough to call me, you will also be kind enough to choose me. You have placed me in the vineyard, and have given me one vine to cultivate, and that vine is my own immortal soul. You have showered upon me manifold graces so that that soul might bring forth fruit in abundance. Not satisfied with calling me at the first hour of my life, you have called me at the third hour, or the time when I first received you in the Eucharist. You have called me at the sixth hour, and the ninth hour, when in countless times you have called out to me in no uncertain way: Why stand ye here all the day idle? Sooner or later, the eleventh hour and the last call shall come for me, and thou, O God, who hast been so

good to me, and who has suffered so much that I might be saved, do not at that time remember the sins of my youth and my ignorance. Grant me the grace to lead such a life that when the evening may come, when I can no longer labor, I may look forward to thy coming, not as to that of an offended and indignant master coming to mete out punishment to a delinquent servant, but to the most gracious Lord, who, knowing my infirmities and my tendency to evil will overlook my shortcomings in thy vineyard and for the few hours good work that I may have done therein will say to me: Well done, thou good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over few things, I will place thee over many, enter thou into the joy of the Lord.

SEXAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* viii. 4–15.

At that time, when a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto him, he spoke by a similitude. The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trodden down and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock: and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture, And other some fell among

thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground; and being sprung up, yielded fruit a hundredfold. Saying these things, he cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And his disciples asked him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to the rest in parables, that seeing they might not see, and hearing, they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. And they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved. Now they upon the rock are they who when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots; for they believe for a while, and in time of temptation, they fall away. And that which fell among thorns, are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. But that on the good ground, are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience.

INSTRUCTION.

The one point that is so striking in this gospel, that it cannot fail to attract the attention of

even the most casual reader, is that though the seed sown was in all probability of the same quality, and was no doubt sowed by the same sower, all through the field, yet the result was not the same in each of the cases mentioned, and that, too, owing to the condition of the ground on which it fell. Some fell by the wayside, and was trodden down; other seed fell on the rock, and withered away; other seed fell among thorns, and was choked by them; and still other seeds fell on good ground, and sprung up, and yielded fruit an hundredfold. From this we learn one very salutary truth, for we see that in the inscrutable wisdom of God, it is not so much the value of the words of the gospel, as the condition of the soul of the hearer. In other words, it makes no great difference who the preacher may be; whether he be one of the world's great orators, or one of the unheard-of ministers of God working all unknown to the world at large for the betterment of the souls of the few in some unimportant country charge, provided what he says be consistent with the word of God, the effect, owing to the grace of God, will be produced in the hearts of the hearers, if they be earnest truth-seekers, and not, as so many unfortunately are, captious critics of the preacher, rather than attentive listeners to the expositions of the doctrines of Christ and his holy Church

The sower went out to sow his seed. And who is the sower if it be not Christ himself, who had just left his humble home, and had gone into the boat to teach the multitude who had come to the shores of Genesareth to hear his consoling and instructive doctrines? As he sits in the boat he can command a full view of the shores of the lake, and his attention is arrested by the husbandman scattering by hand the seeds from which he in time expected to reap his harvest. And as he watches he observes that the farmer scatters the seed without much regard for the condition of the soil; for, mark you well, the conditions of the husbandman of that day differed greatly from the conditions such as we know.

And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside and was trodden down. That is, some of it fell on paths that had been made by the passers-by, and the ground being too hard, it but served as a feast for the birds of the air. And this seed is compared to that class of men who, from time to time hear the word of God, but for some reason or other, known only to themselves, harden their hearts against it, and leave the word of God to be an easy prey for the birds of the air, typifying in this case the Evil One. And how numerous is that unfortunate class. Experience teaches us that their name is almost legion, for go where you will, if you are an observer of men, you can

not fail to notice that there are many for whom the word of God is but an empty sound. Anything that tells them of a higher state; anything bearing on the redemption of mankind, of the heinousness of sin, and the necessity of living according to the commands of God, falls on deaf ears; in other words, falls on the roadside, and is trodden down. But how has the average man brought himself to that deplorable state? Either by one of two ways; by pride of intellect, in refusing to believe anything which he cannot understand, or by carelessness in his daily life, forgetful of his God, and unmindful of the many graces he daily receives; making of his heart a public thoroughfare, as it were, a road over which the devil and the world, and even his own passions may travel at will. But what makes the condition of such a man hard to contemplate, is that he, by his own voluntary act, leaves the seed that God has planted so exposed that his arch enemy cannot fail to see it, and even if he did not see it, it would seem as though such a man would attract his attention to it, so that he might come and devour it, lest, by the grace of God, some one or more seeds might sink in and fructify, and in that way teach him what he should do.

And other some fell on the rock, and because it had no moisture it withered away, soon after it

sprung up. The Lord tells us that they are those who hear the word of God, but in time of temptation fall away. The husbandman would not be foolish enough to sow seed on a barren rock; now in that field there was at least a covering of earth over the rocky under surface, and so too is it with the man whom that soil typifies. He is of a good heart, and mind, and on the occasion of a sermon which seems to fit his own peculiar case he resolves that he is going to amend his mode of life. He can see that he has not been as good or as faithful as he might have been, or should have been, and there is just enough faith in his heart to cause him to make good resolutions. He makes them, and intends to keep them, but he is assailed by his old temptation and for a while he resists, but owing to the shallowness of the good soil, he soon succumbs. The devil has been watching this seed fructifying in the form of good works, but he feels that it is not very deep, and he uproots it by the pet temptations to which that man has given way countless times, or if by the grace of God, the man resists the old, he tries him with the new, and the more violent, and in time of temptation he falls away, and that blade which was ripening for heaven, is soon only fit to be cut down, and cast into the exterior darkness —to be bundled with the others of its kind, and burned.

And some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choked it. Behold the picture of the man who tries to serve two masters—God and mammon. His heart is in a receptive mood —he is willing, almost anxious to live up to the graces that God may give him, but he is torn away from the service of God, by the pursuit of riches, and the pleasures offered to him by a sinful world. The poor man feels that he has been neglected by God, and repines at his poverty ; his more fortunate brother feels that he has much of this world's good, but as yet not enough, and each in the struggle for more, the one to keep body and soul together, the other to attain a higher position in society, becomes unmindful of his God, in the pursuit of what they may term happiness. Here we have the good blade, but it is surrounded by the thorns ; both grow together, but the thorns being the stronger choke all the more laudable ambitions, the impulses for good, and that poor man goes on from day to day consoling himself with the thought that sooner or later he will eradicate the thorns, but only to find that they have attained the mastery, and the good that he would do, he cannot. In other words the pursuit of riches, and pleasures has so engrossed his thoughts, that he can no longer give them to the higher things, and all his good inspirations, and his efforts to do good are choked by the thorns

and the cares of this world and they will bring forth no fruit to perfection, and if they are to be saved at the harvest time, it will only be by a miracle of the All-Loving God.

But other some fell on good ground—and brings forth fruit in patience. These are they who in a good and perfect heart hear the word of God and keep it. Such men hear the word of God, that is the instruction that is imparted to them, with willingness, docility, and a desire to profit by it. They regulate every important action of their lives according to the teaching of the gospel. In times of trial; in temptation, they apply to themselves the teachings of Christ, and his priests. Are they assailed by temptation; immediately they have recourse to prayer, knowing that God will make issue with temptation, and will not allow them to be tempted above their strength. Does the world beckon them on and encourage them to partake of its pleasures, they at once recognize that such pleasures are but transitory, and not at all comparable to those which God has promised to all those who do his holy will. Such a man hears the word of God, keeps it in his memory, meditates upon it, uses it to rout the devil and his emissaries, waters it by his prayers and the sacraments, and brings forth fruit, thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold according to the graces that God may give him.

PRAYER.

Teach me, O, my God, to love, reverence, and obey thy holy word. Sunday after Sunday have I heard the gospel read for me; that gospel which contains your own very words, and many a time have I resolved to put its teachings into my daily life, but, alas, owing to the state of my soul it has not always brought forth the fruit that you have so much desired. It has alas, too often fallen on hard and stony ground, for by the sinfulness of my daily life I have hardened my heart against your word and your graces. But to-day I am resolved that I shall profit by thy teachings. If, to-day you hear the voice of God, harden not your heart. That seems to be the cry that goes ringing through my ears and piercing my very soul as I listen to the reading of to-day's gospel. I have heard thy voice and I shall no longer harden my heart against it, but rather shall open it so that your precious word may sink deeply therein, and bring forth fruit in abundance. If in the past your words have fallen on deaf ears, I am resolved in future to pay strict attention to them, and to try to form my life on the maxims of thy gospel. But of myself I can do nothing, and therefore I need thy especial help to keep the resolution which I am now forming. Help me, O my Divine Redeemer, teach me to prepare my soul for the

worthy reception of thy word, and by prayer and meditation to prepare for the word which is to bring forth fruit in my soul. Strengthen my memory so that I may treasure it up, and give me the grace to carefully consider the truths that I may hear, so that living according to the teachings of thy holy spouse, I may bring forth much fruit in patience, so that thy word may increase in my soul, not thirty, or sixty, but a hundredfold, so that your grace may not be vain in me, but rather may lead me to the enjoyment of eternal life.

QUINQUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

GOSPEL.—*St. Luke* xviii. 31–43.

At that time: Jesus took unto him the twelve, and said to them: Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and scourged, and spit upon: and after they have scourged him, they will put him to death; and the third day he shall rise again. And they understood none of these things, and this word was hid from them, and they understood not the things that were said. Now it came to pass, when he drew nigh to Jericho, that

a certain blind man sat by the wayside, begging. And when he heard the multitude passing by, he asked what this meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying: Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And they that went before, rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried out much more: Son of David have mercy on me. And Jesus standing, commanded him to be brought unto him. And when he was come near, he asked him, saying: What wilt thou that I do to thee? But he said: Lord, that I may see. And Jesus said to him: Receive thy sight: thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he saw, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

INSTRUCTION.

Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things shall be accomplished which were written by the prophets concerning the Son of man. These are the words which holy mother Church would have ringing in our ears for the next seven weeks; for we are approaching the season of Lent; the time specially set apart for meditating on the sufferings and death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is not as though she would not have us always and ever meditate on the death and glorious resurrection of her Spouse and Founder,

but at this particular season of the year she would have us think seriously of the crucified Savior, and bids us do all in our power to atone for the insults and the injuries offered to God.

Christ's life on earth is the model on which we his faithful followers should pattern ours: every act of his public career was performed with an eye single to the good effect that it might have on those who were to come after him, but all the lessons that he tried to inculcate seem to have been crowded into the one grand act of his crucifixion, and it is that heroic act of love for sinful man that the Church would have us study most carefully for the seven weeks of Lent. For that purpose she brings before our minds, the agony in the garden; the scourging at the pillar; the crowning with thorns; the carriage of the cross; and the crucifixion; all of these are put before us separately and specially that we may learn to copy our Lord in his passion, not only in general but in detail. It was for this reason that he caused to be preserved the implements of the passion; the cross, the nails, and the cloth on which he wiped his holy face. But these mute witnesses of the sufferings of the crucified Savior pale into insignificance when compared with that standing memorial of his sufferings, the holy sacrifice of the mass, in which he is daily, albeit in an unbloody manner offered to his heavenly Father for the sins of mankind,

and for the cause of their salvation. The greatest Doctor of the Church, St. Thomas, calls this tremendous sacrifice the greatest miracle which God has ever wrought; and St. Augustine says: Though Almighty he was unable to give more; though all-wise, he knew nothing better to give: though infinitely rich, he had nothing more precious to give. And for what purpose has he performed such a grand work? such a stupendous miracle? Ask him, and he will answer you in the words which he used when instituting the Blessed Sacrament: Do this in commemoration of me. He has instituted the Blessed Sacrament as a standing memorial of his love for mankind: he has made himself a prisoner that he might be always with us, and he bids us come to him from time to time during the Lenten season to sympathize with him. He is sick and sick unto death; he is a prisoner, and bids us come and succor him; he is struggling under the heavy weight of the cross, made almost unbearable by the heavy weight of our sins, and asks us to come and help him carry it. He has said: He that would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

But there are two ways of studying the passion. As you all know there were two conflicting elements at the foot of the cross; the one composed of the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish rabble,

whose only purpose was to see that Christ was put to death, and at the same time to do all they could to augment his sufferings. The other group, composed of his mother, and his few faithful followers, who were there in spite of all opposition, to alleviate by their presence at least, the awful sufferings which he was enduring. It is this latter group that we are to imitate: like them we are to show our love for the Savior by following him through all his trials. Like them we are to compassionate with him, and like them we are to remember that it is not a scene of human suffering that we are witnessing, but the spectacle of a God nailed to the cross for our sins.

Whenever we think of the sufferings of Christ, and are impressed with the thought that it was all done for us, we almost instinctively say that if I had been there at that time I would have been one of the faithful followers: I would have ranged myself with the Blessed Virgin and the other faithful ones, and would have resisted if needs be with my very life any and all attempts to drive me from the foot of the cross. I would have been one of the last to leave that awful scene of suffering, and in every way possible would have tried to show that I was faithful to the end. We have all given expression to that sentiment at some time or other, and yet how many of us have really been in earnest when we said any

thing like it. True it is that the passion is now a thing of the past, and for that reason it is physically impossible for us to prove the truth of what we say we would have done, but yet there is a way that we can prove that we would have been faithful, and that is by being faithful to Jesus Christ in the sacrament of his love. Every one of us can, if we will, be faithful to him there. And does it not seem reasonable to suppose that Christ is almost always giving expression to the same thoughts from the tabernacle that he gave voice to when he told his apostles that he was about to be put to death? What was it that made the thought of death so terrible to him? Was it, think you, the physical agony that he was about to endure, or rather was it not the mental anguish that he was even then experiencing, when looking down the ages he could see many who would profess to be good and faithful Catholics, leaving him alone in the tabernacle with few so good as to do him even the honor of calling to see him to tell him that they love him. What must have been the agony he suffered when he looked down to this our time, and saw so many who would be so unmindful of him in the days of their health and strength that they would not even deign to hear mass in his honor on Sundays. How can such people ever think of Christ and his sufferings and not resolve to be better, more

God-fearing men? They condemn the Jews for putting Christ to death, but are they one whit better than they were? Do they not cause him as much suffering as did the men who put him to the death of the cross? Is there any thing so base as ingratitude, and are such men not the basest of ingrates, for they do all they can do to augment the sufferings of Christ, and that too with the knowledge that he is the risen Savior. But admitting that they come to church Sunday after Sunday, but rarely receive the Blessed Eucharist, do they not show by their conduct that they are lacking in love for God? Here he is in the tabernacle, crying out to them that he is a prisoner, and asking them to come and taste that he is sweet, but despite all his entreaties they will not receive him. And again, many who do receive him from time to time in their hearts do so without giving the subject the consideration it deserves. In times of spiritual awakening they may be moved to come and receive the Lord in their hearts, but are their hearts as pure and unsullied as they should be? Have they resolved that they will amend their sinful lives, and do all they can to enhance the accidental glory of God? Let them remember that God had no need of them, but moved by love for them he created them, redeemed them, sanctified them, and in the Blessed Eucharist gives them his body and blood

to be their spiritual food. Knowing that the last words of any one are as a general rule treasured up in the hearts of them that loved him, he instituted the sacrament of his love at the last supper, and said to the apostles: as often as you do this, do it in commemoration of me. And at that table with the others was Judas, and he took the body and blood of Christ into a heart already tenanted by the devil. But the love of Christ for man was so great that he was even willing to forgive that sacrilege, and despite all the ingratitude that he knew he would receive, he deigned to leave his precious body and blood as a standing memorial of his passion and death, and as a testimony of the love that he bore sinners. Is it to be wondered at then that he was sorrowful almost to death when he told the apostles that he was about to be put to death? And can we add to the agony that he then endured by being unmindful of him at a season when all his faithful followers are about to do penance for the sufferings they have caused him by their sins? Whether you be saint or sinner the time is fast approaching when you will be called upon to emulate the example of the Savior and do penance. He had no need of doing penance, for he was stainless and sinless, but for even the most perfect of us there is a crying need of penance or sorrow for the sins of the past.

To-day's gospel tells us of the favor that Christ bestowed on the poor blind beggar. Let us, following the example of that poor blind man cry out to him; Son of David have mercy on me, and no matter what the disease we may be suffering from Christ will cure us, and will do even more than that, he will come to us and take up his abode with us. And since he is so willing, nay so anxious to come to us, let us open our hearts to him so that he may come there and shower upon us all the graces we may need, but first and above all the grace that we may sympathize with him in his sufferings, and take up our cross and follow him, that doing a little penance for his sake in this world we may merit to be forever happy with him in the next.

PRAYER.

Lord, that I may see. That is the wish and the prayer that I would have you answer for me, O my suffering and crucified Savior. That I might see thee on the cross and that the scales which have covered my eyes might be removed so that I might see that it was my sins and the sins of others that caused thee so much suffering. Lord, that I might see. That I might see thee with the eyes of faith as thou art reposing in the tabernacle, and that I might see into thy sacred heart and see the depths of the love that thou

hast ever borne for me, and that seeing thy heart inflamed with love for me a sinner, I might see the sinfulness of my past life and try to make amends for it; that I might do all in my power to return thee love for love. That I might see thee beckoning to me from the cross, and asking me to make room for thee in my heart; and that I might cleanse and purify my heart by penance and contrition so that it may become a fit dwelling-place for thee. That I might see the wound made by the nails and the lance, and see into thy sacred side, and thus see that thou didst shed the last drop of thy precious blood for my sake. That I might see thee as thou wert at the Last Supper, and that I might realize what thou didst then do for me and for all sinners. In a word that I might see the error of my ways, and forsake them, and that I might see the straight and narrow path that thou hast mapped out for me, and that following it I may see thee in the tabernacle, and that receiving thee frequently and worthily in my heart I may one day hear thee say to me as thou didst to the blind man: thy faith hath made thee whole, and being made whole and free from all sin I may merit through thy grace to see thee in the realms of eternal bliss.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* iv. 1–11.

At that time: Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards he was hungry. And the tempter coming said to him: If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. Who answered and said: It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but by every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God. Then the devil took him into the holy city, and set him upon the pinnacle of the temple, and said to him: If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written: He hath given his angels charge over thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest perhaps thou dash thy foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. Again the devil took him up into a very high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and said to him: All these will I give thee, if falling down thou wilt adore me. Then Jesus said to him, Begone, Satan: for it is written: The Lord thy God shalt thou

adore, and him only shalt thou serve. Then the devil left him: and behold angels came and ministered to him.

INSTRUCTION.

However extraordinary it may appear that Jesus Christ should retire into the desert to be tempted, or however bold and insolent it may seem in the devil thus to attack the Son of God; yet, when we consider the design of our blessed Lord in this particular, we discover a more wonderful effect of his love in our regard; as it was not for his own, but for our advantage, that after his example we might learn to fly from the world, mortify and subdue our passions, and thereby be enabled to resist the temptations we must expect from the devil, who, like a cunning adversary, watches incessantly to attack us with advantage, when he may either surprise our negligence, or prevail against our weakness.

To fly from an enemy, when we are his superior or equal in strength, is a mark of cowardice: but to retreat from one more powerful than ourselves, and who has a great many advantages over us, is not cowardice, but discretion; it is acting according to the rules of prudence, to secure ourselves by a reasonable retirement, rather than expose ourselves rashly to the fatal consequences of an unequal combat. The world may on many ac-

counts be esteemed our enemy, and therefore our greatest security from its dangers, is by a retreat: but by retiring from the world, is not here meant a total separation from it, like that of the ancient fathers in the desert, or those who are called by God to the privacy of a cloister; such a retreat is certainly of great advantage to those who aspire after perfection in the contemplative way; but as for those who are called to an active life, whose duty it is amidst the allurements of the world, to endeavor to serve God and secure their own salvation, the retreat recommended to them is a solitude of heart, and retirement of spirit by weaning our affections from too great an attachment to the enjoyments of this world: though to these also an occasional retirement from the hurry of business, or the vain amusements of life, as far as the circumstances of every one's state will permit, is here recommended from the example of our Savior.

As the most regular clocks must be sometimes taken apart, in order to cleanse them from the dust which they insensibly collect, so the most fervent piety may gradually cool, and the most exemplary Christian fall into some practical error; for the cure of which as well as to rekindle the fire of devotion, retirement, and recollection, will be found indispensably necessary, for the following reasons: first, because the world is

not only replete with dangers which render our salvation extremely difficult, but also because under the specious appearance of comforts and delights, in the pursuit of which the mind is continually agitated, we find nothing but crosses and disappointments, ever seeking after what can afford us no other consolation, than the wretched pleasure of exchanging a present, for a future, misery.

There is another consideration which should induce us to abandon all affection for the world; that to walk in its ways is no better than treading the paths of death, and the broad way which leads to everlasting misery. It is a sacred truth delivered by the mouth of Jesus Christ himself, that in order to be saved we must fly from the world, if not in effect, at least in heart and desire; we must carry our cross, deny ourselves, and follow his footsteps in the narrow paths of penance and mortification. But, alas! how can this be done? by following the world, or governing ourselves by its maxims? Ah! let us not deceive ourselves. The gospel assures us, that no one can serve two masters; we cannot serve God and Mammon. Since God alone then is the only pure fountain of happiness, let us not seek for it, but in himself and his service: let us abandon the world, in which nothing is to be found but trouble and disappointments; uncertain satisfac-

tions here, and the germ of everlasting misery hereafter: though engaged in the world by our necessary affairs and the duties of our station, let us not be corrupted by its maxims, but preserve our hearts uncontaminated, by solitude and retirement of spirit, after the example of Jesus our master.

Another important truth exhibited to us by the fasting and retirement of our Savior, is to mortify and subdue our passions, that we may be enabled to overcome the temptations to which we are exposed in the world. The Son of God not only retired into the desert, but there mortified himself by the rigorous observance of a long fast, not for his own but for our sins: to convince us, that in order to secure our eternal salvation, we must not only retire from the vanities of the world, but also mortify and keep our passions in subjection, lest otherwise they should become our masters, and reduce us to the most degrading servitude. If we gratify the desires of the flesh, we weaken the spirit, and render it unable to resist the attacks of the enemy. By pampering, and nourishing our bodies, by indulging our appetites, and gratifying our sensual inclinations, we add fuel to the fire of concupiscence, and furnish our adversary with arms against ourselves. Alas! how can we expect to overcome the temptations to which we are daily exposed by

a life of softness and sensuality; a life so very opposite to the character of a Christian, and the maxims of the gospel, which everywhere exhort us to the practice of penance and mortification. It is for this purpose that we are called to the observance of Lent, that we might in some measure, follow the example of our Divine Master, who, when the devil tempted him to change stones into bread, replied: Man liveth not by bread alone, thereby intimating, that although corporal food be necessary for the support of the body, which is but a part, and the less noble part of man; and as the soul is infinitely more valuable than the body, it is for the welfare of the former that we should be most solicitous being continually exposed to the assaults of its enemies. We must therefore endeavor to preserve it by a diligent use of those arms wherewith God has furnished us. Nor can our enemies be ever able to prevail against us, except through our own sloth and negligence: the devil may assault, and tempt us, as he did our Savior, but he cannot force us; he can only solicit, and importune, but he can never oblige us to commit sin. God has left us at liberty: he has endowed us with free will and offers us the assistance of his grace, by which we may reject all temptations of the devil. Resist him then, and he will fly from you, as he did from Jesus Christ.

PRAYER.

O, adorable Savior of mankind, how much am I indebted to thy goodness! Thou didst retire into the desert; thou didst fast and pray, and permit thyself to be tempted by the devil, that following thy example, I might also overcome him: lead me then, dear Lord, into an internal solitude, and let me fly from the vanities and dangers of the world. O, may I never rashly expose myself to danger, nor fall a prey to the enemy, through my own imprudence or weakness. O, let me die to the world, that I may live only to thee; may I for thy love, despise all the enjoyments of this life. O, replenish my soul with such seraphic flames, as may burn and consume all earthly desires! Since thou art my true and only happiness, thee only do I wish for, and after thee only do I seek: here will I mortify myself, and keep my irregular passions in subjection that they may no more rise in rebellion against thee, or cause me to transgress thy holy law.

O, adorable Jesus! if the devil had the rashness to attack thy incomparable sanctity, thy invincible strength, thy consummate virtue, what is there that he will not undertake against such a poor, weak and feeble creature as I am? O, divine Jesus, how can I prevail against so powerful and so crafty an enemy? I pray, O my God, that

thou wilt not permit him to tempt me beyond my strength. I am strong against him by the help of thy grace, and this thou art always ready and willing to grant me. O, Victim and Conqueror of sin and death! come to my assistance. Defend me from this roaring lion. May I be safe from his fury under the shadow of thy wings. O, Infinite Bounty, from the treasures of thy mercy strengthen my weakness and assist me, that I may fight with courage and resolution, till I obtain a complete victory over all the enemies of my soul, to the honor and glory of thy adorable name, sweet Jesus.

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xvii. 1–9.

And after six days, Jesus taketh unto him Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them. And his face did shine as the sun: and his garments became white as snow. And, behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then Peter, answering, said to Jesus: Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for thee,

and one for Moses, and one for Elias. And as he was yet speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them. And, behold, a voice out of the clouds, saying: This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye him. And the disciples hearing, fell upon their face, and were very much afraid. And Jesus came, and touched them: and said to them: Arise, and be not afraid. And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, but only Jesus. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying: Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead.

INSTRUCTION.

As the design of our divine Redeemer, in conducting SS. Peter, James, and John, up to a high mountain, there to behold the glory of his transfiguration, was to encourage them, the better to discharge those arduous labors for which they were designed, as also to bear with patience, those sufferings their divine Master had told them they should undergo, in the hope of obtaining thereby the glory of heaven, of which, what they beheld upon Mount Thabor, was but a faint representation; so, the same is the design of his Church, in selecting this portion of the holy scriptures for her gospels of to-day:

that being led thereby, to a consideration of the infinite happiness and glory of the other world, we might with more ease, and courage, pursue our journey through the arduous, and difficult paths of mortification, self-denial, fasting, prayer, and works of penance, which will infallibly conduct us to that glorious and happy kingdom, the sight of which will make us exclaim with St. Peter, Lord it is good for us to be here! That the apostle, in a rapture of joy and admiration, should desire to remain on Mount Thabor, and express his reluctance to quit the glories he there beheld, is by no means surprising: but that among Christians, who profess themselves to be the disciples of Jesus Christ, there should be found so many, who express a similar desire with regard to earthly objects, is truly amazing. The world alas! has nothing in it desirable; nothing permanent; nothing that can render us happy; and yet many are so blind with an affection for its enjoyments, and so strongly attached to its pleasures, riches, and honors, that forgetful of their heavenly country, they cry out: It is good for us to be here. O, fatal degeneracy of the Christian character! O, deplorable blindness of those, who, by an inordinate affection for the vain and transient pleasures of this world, hazard the inexpressible, the permanent glory and happiness of the next!

To correct so egregious an error, the Church, as has been observed, this day proposes the happiness of heaven for our consideration: that we might make a wise and prudent choice; by not preferring momentary satisfactions, to solid, and everlasting comforts. Let us then enter unto her sentiments, and make the world the subject of our serious reflections. On examination we shall discover it to be that which deceives, and involves its votaries in ruin. This will appear, when we consider, that to render man truly happy, three things are necessary. First, Something that is capable of satisfying all his desires: for to enjoy one thing which we desire, and to want another which we ardently wish for, is but a partial happiness, or rather a misery; as the pain felt by the want of the one, deprives us of the pleasure of enjoying the other. Secondly, We must not only discover what will satisfy all our desires, but we must also possess it. Thirdly, This possession must not be of a short and uncertain, but of a long and permanent duration, without the fear of losing it: but this is not to be found in the world, which has nothing capable of satisfying the desires of a heart created for God, and which can never be contented but in him: nor can we be said truly to possess any thing we esteem in this world, since the enjoyment we have of it is to last for so short a time.

For the truth of the first assertion, we appeal to worldlings themselves, even those who enjoy the largest share of honors, riches, and pleasures; are they satisfied? No: something is still wanting: they would rise to a higher dignity, possess more riches, and enjoy some new pleasure. This is an evident proof that they only enjoy the shadow, instead of the substance. If any one then, can be styled happy in the possession of the things of this world, it is he who is content with a competency suitable to his station; and yet the trouble to procure, and maintain even that, is often so great, as to render such a one far from being perfectly happy.

No one can, strictly speaking, be said to possess any thing in this world. Our thoughts, it is true, may be occupied about them; our hearts and inclinations may bend towards them; but alas! this is not to possess them, as we may have them in our power, and yet not enjoy them. A covetous man does not possess his riches, but his riches are rather in possession of him: the same may be said of pleasure, or any other worldly enjoyment. And though we should have them, yet the enjoyment of them is of so uncertain a duration, as to be accounted rather an imaginary than a real possession; a dream, a vapor, an illusion; for we cannot enjoy them long, and we are certain that sooner or later we must

quit them. Can we then, without extreme folly, fix our affections on the false pleasures and fading possessions of this world, which it may be said we can neither possess nor enjoy, since they pass and repass, and are so subject every moment to change.

This being the real state of the world, and of the false happiness it affords, have we any reason to say, It is good for us to be here: No, certainly: it is only in heaven; in the possession and enjoyment of God himself, that we can be truly happy. It is good for us to be where all our desires will be abundantly satisfied. In heaven we shall desire nothing which we shall not have, nor seek any thing which we shall not find: there will be joy without sorrow, plenty without want, health without sickness: no scorching heat, no piercing cold, no poverty, no disgrace, no want of friends; no crosses or disappointments, but a continual flow of everlasting pleasures and delights. There we shall see God face to face. There we shall behold him as he is. In the possession of him we shall enjoy all things; in a word, we shall enjoy what eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor the heart of man can comprehend, not for a short time but for ever: we shall truly possess them, and as we can never lose the possession of them our enjoyment will last for eternity, as long as God is God. After ten thousand millions

of ages, they will be still new, still fresh, and no nearer their end than at the beginning, for there can be no period to an endless eternity.

Ah! this is happiness indeed; yet this happiness is offered to every one, and every one may obtain it. If in acquiring it, we suffer some troubles and afflictions here, shall we not be more than abundantly recompensed hereafter? Is it not the height of practical folly, to run the hazard of losing heaven for any thing that can be obtained on earth? O, let us then remember the end for which we were created, for which we were redeemed by the adorable blood of Jesus Christ. Call to mind, O, Christian, your dignity, cries out Tertullian, remember you are a candidate for eternity. Think then, only of God, desire nothing but him; let all your actions be directed to him; seek only him upon earth, if you desire to reign eternally with him in heaven.

PRAYER.

How lovely are thy tabernacles, O, Lord of Hosts! My soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord. O, heaven! O, celestial paradise! to thee do I lift up my eyes, and with a longing heart, and stretched out arms, languish for the possession of thy glory. O, God of infinite goodness! who hast promised heaven, to such as love

and serve thee, how can I sufficiently admire thy excessive bounty, thus to reward our trifling services? Shall I not then love thee? Shall I not serve thee? Shall I not obey thee? Yes, my God! I will love thee, honor, and obey thee; for thou art the best of masters, and thy rewards, like thyself, are infinite, and incomprehensible. Thou hast created me for the enjoyment of heaven and eternal happiness. O, bountiful Author of my existence, shall I despise the glory of thy happy kingdom, to busy myself about the trifles of this world, and foolishly seek for happiness where it cannot be found? Ah no; I will rather despise the world with its short-lived pleasures; all my attention shall be directed towards heaven: there will I fix my thoughts: there shall all my endeavors terminate. Adieu, vain world! I bid you an eternal farewell: all that I desire is, to attain the possession of my God, and be happy with him forever.

Who will give me the wings of a dove, that I may fly away from the troubles of this miserable world, and rest, dear Lord, with thee? When shall my happy soul possess thee, sweet Jesus, the only object of my wishes and desires? When shall I arrive at thy charming place of abode, where I shall for ever enjoy thee, without the least fear of losing thee? Ah, my God! release my soul out of prison, the sad prison of this miserable

body, wherein alas! I have so often offended thee; then shall I praise and glorify thy holy name: For what have I in heaven? and besides thee what do I desire upon earth?

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL.—*St. Luke* xi. 14–28.

At that time: Jesus was casting out a devil, and the same was dumb. And when he had cast out the devil, the dumb spoke, and the multitude were in admiration at it. But some of them said: He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And others tempting asked of him a sign from heaven. But he, seeing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be roughbt to desolation, and house upon house shall fall. And if Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because you say, that through Beelzebub I cast out devils. Now if I cast out devils by Beelzebub: by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges. But if I by the finger of God cast out devils: doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which

he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armor wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with me, is against me: and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through places without water, seeking rest: and not finding, he saith: I will return into my house whence I came out. And when he is come, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and entering in they dwell there. And the last state of that man becometh worse than the first. And it came to pass, as he spoke these things, a certain woman from the crowd lifting up her voice, said to him: Blessed is the womb that bore thee, and the paps that gave thee suck. But he said: Yea rather blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it.

INSTRUCTION.

There are dumb devils; and talkative devils; or, in other words, the devil sometimes makes men speak, and sometimes be silent: when a Christian should speak for the glory of God, to defend the cause of virtue, or to discountenance vice, then to keep silence is to be possessed in some measure, by a dumb devil, which must be

cast out by the power of Jesus, by reflecting on the obligations we are under of maintaining the character of a Christian, and not betray it by a criminal silence, when the honor of God and the good of our neighbor, call upon us to speak the truth with freedom. But when we give a criminal liberty to our tongue, by speaking ill of our neighbor, or lessening his reputation, and ruining his character by calumny and detraction, then it is, that the devil speaks with an infernal eloquence, and that we, as his instruments, do infinite prejudice to ourselves, and others. The world is so full of this sort of orators, that no vice can be said to be more common, and universal, than the sin of detraction—it is, alas! so general, that there is scarcely any company or place free from it. And thus, whilst it is condemned by every one, there are few, or none to be found, who are not guilty of it. The scripture informs us, that the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in the form of tongues; but alas! how different is the language of this Divine Spirit, from that which we daily hear from the mouths of Christians, who glory in calling themselves the disciples of Christ, and pretend to believe, and profess the holy doctrine which he taught! The language of that Divine Spirit is the language of charity, goodness and truth; but that of the detractor, is of hatred, malice and lies: so that we

may venture to affirm, the sin of detraction to be in some sense a sin against the Holy Ghost, since nothing can be more contrary to the spirit of charity and union, than that which dissolves universal love, and causes contention and discord.

The spirit of Jesus Christ is a spirit of union and charity. He prayed to his eternal Father, that as they were one, so his disciples might be one. Not by unity of nature, as the Father and the Son are one and the same God, but by unity of charity and love. That as there is but one God, one faith, and one baptism, so all might be as one in love. This was that admirable effect which the Holy Ghost produced in the primitive Christians, of whom it is recorded in the acts of the apostles, that they were all of one heart. But alas! the sin of detraction destroys this happy union, by separating those who are united by the strongest, and most sacred bonds. Christians are members of the Church of Christ; the sons of that holy mother, who embraces them all as her children, and employs her prayers, tears, exhortations, and admonitions, that a fraternal charity and union may always subsist among them. But, notwithstanding all the entreaties and tears of so tender a mother, the detractor stabs his brother in the most sensitive part, and takes a diabolical pleasure in robbing him of what is more dear to him than his life.

The Holy Ghost is a spirit of bounty and goodness, whilst the spirit of detraction is on the contrary the cause of infinite evils, being the offspring of malice, and envy. The spirit of God may be styled a circle of munificence which passes from one good to another, and bestows nothing but graces and favors. This is the benevolent spirit which ought to shine in the conduct of Christians: but how little of it appears in the behavior of those, who take pleasure in detracting, and speaking ill of their neighbors? On the contrary, calumny may be called a circle always moving from one evil to another, by continually heaping fuel on the fire of strife and contention. It is a malignant poison, which infects and corrupts all within its corroding influence.

The spirit of God is a spirit of truth; but that of detraction is composed of falsehood; and although it is an abomination in the sight of God, and the just object of detestation with all sincere Christians, nevertheless this great and damnable sin is committed every day without scruple or remorse. After so sad, but just a description of this sin, we might be astonished to find it so common among Christians, had we not daily and demonstrative proofs of so deplorable a fact. Are not the defects of others the common topic of conversation? are not the actions and behavior of the absent the subject of daily entertainment?

Every one erects a court of judicature; sets himself up on the bench as a judge, cites his neighbor to the bar, and without hearing what may be said in his favor, immediately condemns him: but what are the grounds of such censures? slight surmises; a mere report, which envy or malice considers a sufficient evidence to justify uncharitable and rash judgments: how often does pride induce us to degrade the character of another, that we may build our reputation upon the ruin of his? If his virtue and innocence are too clear to be openly denied, how often is it diminished with a but for all that: notwithstanding his virtue, he is so, and so: he said, or did, this or that. O! that Christians would seriously reflect upon the nature of this sin, how odious it is to God, and how prejudicial to themselves. For with what judgment you have judged: and with what measure you have measured, it shall be measured to you. Judgment without mercy, to those who have not shown mercy.

The most effectual antidote against this sin, is always to act according to the golden rule of doing as we would be done by: the same tender regard we desire our neighbor should have for our reputation, let us also have for his. When we have the misfortune to commit a fault, we naturally desire that others, before they condemn us, should consider whether it may not

proceed from an error of judgment, and not of the will; that they would consider that our intention might be good, that it might proceed from inadvertence or indiscretion. Let us ever observe this method in forming our judgment of others, and always put the best construction upon the words and actions of our neighbor; but, above all, we must take care not to charge him with false crimes, nor discover his secret sins, unless to those whom it may concern, for his benefit and reformation.

PRAYER.

O! Jesus, the bright mirror of truth and justice! send a cherubim, with coals from thy holy altar, to purify my heart and lips from the crying sin of slander and detraction. Let me never be guilty of what is odious to thee, prejudicial to my neighbor and hurtful to myself. Let charity direct me to give the most favorable interpretation to the actions of others, that I may find mercy at thy hands, when I shall appear to be judged at thy tribunal. May I leave others to thee, who art the supreme judge of all mankind, and only attend to myself, lest by incurring the guilt of rash judgment, I shall offend thee, injure my brethren, and hazard the eternal salvation of my own soul.

Ah, my soul! let us take care to avoid the enormous evil of detractions. Let the reputation of our neighbor be as dear to us as our own. O, my God! place a guard before my mouth, and a gate of prudence before my lips, that I may not offend with my tongue: that I may neither offend thee, injure my neighbor, nor murder my own soul. O, God of love! the mirror of most perfect charity, let me, in some measure, strive to imitate thee, by never saying or doing any thing to the prejudice of another: may I glorify thee, in those gifts and graces thou bestowest upon my neighbor, and magnify thee for thy mercies to all mankind. O! may the spirit of love and charity reign in all our hearts, that we may mutually and sincerely love each other: preserve us, dear Lord, in peace, unity and concord, that with one heart, and one voice we may praise and glorify thee here, and be forever happy with thee hereafter.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT.

GOSPEL.—*John* vi. 1–15.

At that time: Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee which is that of Tiberias: and a great multitude followed him: because they saw the great miracles which he did on them that were

infirm. And Jesus went up into a mountain: and there he sat with his disciples. Now the pasch, the festival day of the Jews, was near at hand. When Jesus, therefore, had lifted up his eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to him, he said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to try him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him: Two hundred pennyworth is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, saith to him: There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many? Then Jesus said: Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. The men therefore sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to them that were set down. In like manner also of the fishes, as much as they would. And when they were filled, he said to his disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost. They gathered up therefore, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above to them that had eaten. Now these men, when they had seen what a miracle Jesus had done, said: This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world. Jesus

therefore, when he knew that they would come to take him by force and make him king, fled again into the mountain himself alone.

INSTRUCTION.

The miracles of our blessed Savior, whilst they attract our admiration, afford us most salutary instruction: such is the miracle recorded in this day's gospel. Considering the tender compassion shown by Jesus Christ to the multitude who followed him and his generous bounty in supplying their necessities, we may behold the wonderful effect of his providence over his creatures, and learn to put our confidence in him. If we are astonished at the miracle which the Son of God wrought in feeding five thousand men, with five barley loaves and two fishes we have no less reason to admire and adore his goodness in supporting the whole universe. His providence not only extends itself to created nature in general, but to every part in particular: each individual is the object of his affectionate solicitude.

God, who is essentially good, who, through the effect of his goodness, has created us, never ceases to take care of us, as we stand in daily need of his assistance and protection: were he to abandon us but for a moment, we should instantly drop into our original nothingness. Nor can this be

doubted, when we consider his anxiety for the preservation of even the most inconsiderable part of the creation: the grass, the diversity of flowers which adorn the face of nature, and which grow by order of his providence, are decked with more native beauty than Solomon possessed amidst all his magnificence: the birds of the air are fed by his bountiful hand; and, if a single sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his permission, shall man, the most noble of all created beings, made after his own image and likeness, be supposed to be abandoned by him? Ah! ought not this consideration alone be sufficient to induce us to rely on the providence of God? Is it not, therefore, the most irreconcilable of all paradoxes to behold man alone question the goodness of his Creator?

The care which God takes to preserve the being he has given us, ought to be a sufficient reason to excite our confidence in his protection: let us then place all our hopes in him, who neither can, nor will, deceive us. Whatever we trust to in this world, whether friends or riches, is weak and uncertain, and often deceives us when we most require its assistance.

But if we have every reason to rely on the providence of God, for the infinite goodness manifested in our preservation, so we are obliged humbly to revere and adore the secret decrees of

his infinite wisdom in our regard, particularly in time of persecution, poverty, or sickness. How often do we behold the most innocent, upright, and meritorious characters, abandoned to the violent rage and unjust persecution of wicked men; that by means so apparently opposite and contradictory, the secret designs of providence in their favor may be accomplished? We have an illustrious example in the person of the patriarch Joseph, who was sold as a slave to foreign merchants, and carried into Egypt, where, after having remained in captivity for some years, upon the false accusation of his mistress he was flung into prison among the most criminal malefactors. When we consider him in this situation, unable to help himself, or vindicate his innocence, could we imagine that he would afterwards be raised to such high honors and dignities; and yet we behold his slavery and imprisonment the very means by which he ascended to the second degree of power in Egypt. So, whilst oppressed by the hardships of poverty, or suffering under a long and painful infirmity, we must not ask of God the reason why we are poor, or why we are sick; but rest satisfied that it is agreeable to the will of God, and through the dispensation of his providence. He has called the poor blessed, and designed for them eternal riches: though poor in this world, if we are rich in the next, we shall

have no reason to complain. In all our troubles and misfortunes, or under whatever afflictions we may labor, God will be our support and our reward: if we place our trust in him, he will either deliver us from our sufferings, or enable us to support them. He will also be our recompense, if, in submission to his adorable will, we suffer with patience and constancy.

Nor is the power of God, whereby he manifests the designs of his providence in our regard, less apparent than his goodness and wisdom. He is, of himself, and self-existent, sovereign, independent being, the great Architect of the universe, who brought all things out of nothing into existence by the efficacy of the single word Fiat. We, on the contrary, are his creatures, dependent, not only on him, but upon each other. Now the design of God in this mutual dependence is apparent from the necessity in which every individual stands of the aid of another, that thereby each might contribute to the welfare of the great body of which he is a member: hence the different ranks in society: some rich; some poor: some placed in a higher, and others in a lower sphere of life, requiring the assistance of each other: some placed in authority, to command; others in a state of subjection, to obey. It is this wise economy that keeps the world in order, and prevents that anarchy and

confusion, which otherwise would be the necessary consequence of all being on an equality: the poor stand in need of the rich, for employment and assistance; and the wants of the rich are supplied by the labor of the poor: thus, whilst there exists this mutual dependence between them, no one should envy, scorn, or despise another: the poor must not envy the rich; nor the rich despise the poor: those who are rich must imitate their divine Master, and say: I have compassion on the multitude, and consequently relieving them in their necessities, be the instruments in the hands of that providence which extends itself over the poor, as well as the rich. Thus shall we answer the designs of God, and fulfil our several obligations. As we believe in providence, let us rely upon it, and put our whole trust in God, not in the things of this world: let us adore his secret decrees, and submit to his guidance. Let us concur in his designs upon earth, that we may merit the reward he has promised as a recompense to us in heaven.

PRAYER.

O, great Creator and preserver of the universe! How wonderful art thou in the all-wise dispensations of thy providence! Prostrate in thy presence I humbly adore thee, and with all submission resign myself to thy will through all the occur-

rences of life. I reject all superfluous solicitude for the things of this world. I know that thou wilt not abandon those who place their trust in thee. Thou hast pledged thy word to supply our necessities, and to grant us what is necessary: nor can I have a better security than thy promise, which can never fail. On thee therefore will I altogether rely. I adore thee in all thy secrets; submit myself to thy guidance, and will endeavor to concur in all thy designs. O, may I never have any other rule for the direction of my actions, than thy blessed will! May my whole happiness be placed therein, and may all my desires terminate in this divine petition, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

How bountiful, how admirable, O, divine Jesus! is thy goodness towards those that love thee! Ah, dearest Lord! what is there in the whole world that can be compared to thee? What are all earthly things to a soul who placeth its hopes in thee alone. Thy mercies are infinite; thy goodness knows no bounds: suffer me not to love any thing besides thyself, nor place my affections upon the goods of this world, which are unable to render me happy. In vain do I seek for happiness out of thee; without thee all things are to me as nothing, for thou only art the object of my love, nor will I desire anything but thee, O, sweetest Jesus! my God and my all.

PASSION SUNDAY

Is so called from the immediate consideration of the sufferings of our blessed Savior, to which the church now most earnestly invites us: though the whole Fast of Lent is designed as a preparation duly to commemorate the passion and resurrection of our Lord, yet, from this Sunday till Easter Day, the Church requires we should turn our thoughts, and direct our devotions in a more particular manner, to the honor and remembrance of Christ's sacred passion and sufferings; and, in order that we might suffer something with him and for him, this part of Lent was formerly observed with greater rigor than the rest. St. Epiphanius says, "All the faithful were wont to observe the six days of the Passover as days of Xerophagi, (dried meats.)" The Apostolic Constitutions order the faithful to fast with bread, salt, herbs, and water only, during the days of the Passover. It is to be observed that the ancient fathers give the name of Pasche to the passion of our Savior, as well as to his resurrection. The Eastern Churches observe the last week of Lent, beginning from Palm Sunday, as the passion time; but in the Latin Church, passion time begins from the Sunday preceding Palm Sunday, from which day till Easter Satur-

day, the crucifixes and altar pictures are covered, and the Church omits her common Doxology, of Gloria Patri, in the sacrifice of the mass, and in some parts of her office, to signify to us, that it is a time of mourning for the sufferings of our Lord, as also for our sins, which were the cause of his passion and death.

GOSPEL.—*John* viii. 46–59.

At that time: Jesus said to the multitude of the Jews: Which of you shall convince me of sin? If I say the truth to you, why do you not believe me? He that is of God, heareth the words of God. Therefore you hear them not, because you are not of God. The Jews therefore answered; and said to him. Do not we say well that thou art a Samaritan and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil: but I honor my Father, and you have dishonored me. But I seek not my own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Amen, amen, I say to you: If any man keep my word, he shall not see death for ever. The Jews therefore said: Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets: and thou sayest: If any man keep my word, he shall not taste death for ever. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, who is dead? and the prophets are dead. Whom dost thou make thyself? Jesus answered: If I glorify

myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom you say that he is your God. And you have not known him, but I know him. And if I should say that I know him not, I should be like to you, a liar. But I do know him, and do keep his word. Abraham, your father, rejoiced that he might see my day: he saw it, and was glad. The Jews therefore said to him: Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am. They took up stones therefore to cast at him. But Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple.

INSTRUCTION.

O, that Christians were circumspect in their behavior, and so exact in the observance of their respective duties, as to be able to say: Who can convict me of sin? It is certain that Christianity engages its professors to at least some degree of sanctity: though we cannot pretend to impeccability, like our divine Master, nevertheless, by endeavoring to follow his example, and by regulating our lives according to his maxims, whose assisting grace is always at hand to help us, we may be able to say: Who is there that can convict me of a voluntary transgression of his commands? Though we are not by nature impec-

cable, and by the fall of our first parents, we are prone to sin from our youth; we find a law in our members fighting against the law of our mind, and holding us captives in the law of sin, yet the grace of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, is able to deliver us and restore us to the glorious liberty of the sons of God; For he that is of God, heareth the words of God, says Jesus Christ, and it is only those that can say: Who can convict me of sin? Hence it follows that the commands of God are not impossible to be kept; that the spirit of Christianity consists in the observance of them: and that if we do not observe them, it is our own fault.

That the commandments of God are possible to be kept, is an article of our faith, and therefore not to be questioned by any who call themselves Catholics. If it be necessary to observe them in order to be saved, it is but reasonable that the means of keeping them should be within our power. Our blessed Savior said to the lawyer: If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments (Matt. xix.), but we cannot suppose he would have ordered him to observe them, if they were impossible to be kept. Our condition would be miserable indeed, if we were obliged to observe what was not in our power! but God has not dealt thus with us. He is not a cruel tyrant to command impossibilities, under the pain of eter-

nal damnation. He is not so hard, so austere a master, as to expect to reap where he has not sown, or require more than he gave; no, he is an indulgent lord—a generous master—and a tender parent: his yoke is easy, and his burden light. His commandments are not heavy, much less impossible. We are able, and may, through the assistance of his grace, perform what he requires. It is, besides, highly injurious to God, and unworthy of his justice, to admit rewards and punishments in a future state, for those who do or do not observe them, and yet suppose it impossible to keep the commandments. Ah! far be such blasphemous thoughts from us. Let us acknowledge the possibility of keeping them, and be convinced that the spirit of Christianity consists in the observance of them.

If the duty of a Christian was comprised in the speculative opinions of acknowledging Christ to be the Son of God, and believing those truths he has revealed: if to talk of virtue were sufficient, without the practice of moral goodness; then indeed, no one would deny Christianity to be a very accommodating religion, and the ministers of the gospel would be at little pains to bring Christians to their duty. But to entertain such notions is not less injurious to the gospel, than prejudicial to those who hold them, because, they impugn truth itself, and contradict this positive

assertion of Jesus Christ; Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my Father who is in heaven. The will of God is, that we live soberly, justly, and piously in this world, abstaining from all impiety and worldly desires, This is the spirit of Christianity—the substance of the commandments which we must observe. But if we content ourselves with the bare name of Christians: or, if our lives are a contradiction to that sacred name, in vain do we expect to be numbered among the children of God.

St. Peter desires us, to strive by good works to make our calling and election sure. As we have been called to the knowledge of God and the true faith, and are of the number of his children, it is our interest and our duty to secure this election, by perseverance in his service. Then are you my disciples and friends, says Christ, if you do what I command you. Hence it is evident, that Christianity is a practical religion; if it instructs us in holy principles, it is with the intent that they should direct, and have an influence on our morals; for it will but add to our condemnation, to profess the principles of the gospel, if our practice be not conformable thereto, yet alas! practical piety seems almost exploded. Amazing paradox! men talk, read, and hear much of religion and piety: and yet how few reduce it to

practice: it cannot be because practical piety is impossible. No; the contrary has been demonstrated: the profession of Christianity supposes it, and it is in it, that the essence of Christianity consists: the cause is to be found in the depravity of the will, in the violent attachment of the things of this world. Let us not deceive ourselves, O, Christians! the commandments of God are not impossible to be kept: it is then no less our interest than our duty to observe them: if we do not it is our own fault, and we shall justly feel that punishment which our non-observance of them deserves.

From what has been said, it is evident, that we ourselves are only to blame if we do not observe the commandments: and that, though the lives of Christians in general be extremely irregular, and not conformable to the sanctity of their profession, yet some are to be found uncontaminated by the almost general corruption of vice, some there are whose lives, by a strict observance of the gospel precepts, are bright examples of practical piety. These we can and ought to imitate. What they do, may be done by us. And their strict piety is a just reproach to our criminal negligence. What we behold done by others, we cannot pretend to be out of our power, since we are equally capable, and have the same assistance; for the grace of God, which is always the same is

offered to every one. The assistance of the holy sacraments is designed for all the faithful. God's holy word is equally preached to all, and all are equally told what they must do to obtain eternal life. If any thing therefore be wanting, the defect is on our parts, which renders us more inexcusable; and if we fail to obtain eternal happiness, by not observing the commandments, we have only ourselves to blame, and shall see our folly when it is too late to retrieve it.

PRAYER.

O, Jesus! thou bright mirror of innocence and purity, whom no one can convict of sin; grant me the grace to copy after the perfect example thou hast set me, that I may never wilfully incur the guilt of sin. Dear Redeemer of mankind! I desire to transcribe my virtues in my life and conversation. I acknowledge thy goodness, in having made me a member of thy holy Catholic Church, and am ashamed that I have hitherto so faintly complied with the duties of my religion. O, may I be more diligent in co-operating with thy grace for the time to come. As my faith is sound, so let my life be holy, that by an exact observance of thy commands, I may edify my neighbor, and promote thy honor and glory. Thou hast said: he that is of me, heareth my words: I desire to belong to thee, and therefore

will not only hear thee, but in all things obey thee.

It is thus only, O, my divine Master! that I can prove myself thy true disciple. Thou hast given me a sweet yoke, an easy burden; a law of love, which makes all things pleasant; a law which is sweeter than honey to the mouth, or music to the ear; upon it will I meditate day and night, and it shall be the only rule of my conduct. Thy commands, ever sweet and amiable, are designed to bring me to the happy enjoyment of thyself. O, bounteous Lord, in all that thou requirest of me, thou seekest nothing but my good. Ah! may I daily endeavor to correspond with thy gracious designs, by an inviolable observance of all thou commandest; and, O, may I be so happy as to hear thee address me with this gracious invitation, Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of thy Lord.

PALM SUNDAY.

Takes its name from an ancient custom, still retained in the Church, of solemnly blessing palms, or the boughs of trees, and distributing them to the faithful, who bear them in their hands this day, in honor and in remembrance of our blessed Lord's triumphant entry into Jerusa-

lem six days before his passion, when the multitude going forth to meet him, some strewing boughs of trees in the way, others spreading their garments, and others carrying branches of palms in their hands, and all exclaiming, Hosanna to the Son of David, etc. From this entry of Jesus Christ into Jerusalem, the Church reads us a profound lesson of humility. Our blessed Savior, though he was Lord of heaven and earth, yet chose to ride upon an ass, the meanest and most contemptible of beasts, to correct our pride, and teach us not to affect the grandeur and honors of this world, which are so vain and transitory, Let us then practice humility, that thereby imitating our divine Savior, we may the better dispose ourselves to celebrate the mysteries of this Holy Week, and partake of the mercies designed for us.

AT BLESSING OF THE PALMS.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xxi. 1–9.

At that time: Jesus drawing near to Jerusalem; and being come to Bethpage, at Mount Olivet, he sent two of his disciples, and said to them: Go ye into the village that is over against you, and immediately you shall find an ass tied and a colt with her: loose them and bring them

to me: and if any man shall say anything to you, say ye, that the Lord hath need of them: and forthwith he will let them go. Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: Tell ye the daughter of Sion: Behold thy king cometh to thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of her that is used to the yoke. And the disciples going, did as Jesus commanded them. And they brought the ass and the colt: and laid their garments upon them, and made him sit thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way: and others cut boughs from the trees, and strewed them in the way: and the multitudes that went before and that followed, cried, saying: Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

INSTRUCTION.

Nothing can be more inconstant than the world: nothing more vain than the honors with which it flatters its admirers. The wind which so frequently changes, is not so uncertain as human applause. Of this, the conduct of the Jews towards our blessed Savior, is a convincing proof. The holy Jesus made his entry into Jerusalem amidst the acclamations and hosannas of the people, who, on hearing he was approaching,

went out in multitudes to meet him, bearing palms in their hands, and strewing the way with boughs of trees. Others more zealous to show him respect, removed some of their garments and spread them in the highway; all crowding about him, and singing aloud, Hosanna in the highest: blessed be he who cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna to the Son of David. In this manner they conducted him into the city, with all the marks of a sincere veneration: but no sooner had he entered into the city, than the multitude dispersed, without taking any further notice of him, or inviting him to their homes to take refreshments; so that this day of triumph was to our blessed Lord a day of fasting, as in the evening he was obliged to quit the city, and retire to Bethania, there to seek for lodging and refreshment for himself and for his disciples. Strange inconsistency of a giddy multitude! true picture of the world, and what we may expect from it.

It is in commemoration of this entrance of Christ into Jerusalem, that the Church orders palms, or boughs of trees, to be blessed, and borne in the hands of her children; desiring, at the same time, that we would enter into her pious sentiments, and learn those practical lessons she inculcates from this day's solemnity. Having now passed over the greatest part of

Lent, we are come to the last week , justly called holy, on account of those sacred mysteries which are particularly proposed for our pious reflections, and the subject of the long and solemn devotions of the Church at this time. We must now, by retirement, and a more than ordinary devotion, atone for what has been deficient in our conduct during the holy time of Lent. We should seriously consider what God has done for us, his immense love, and our reciprocal obligations to him. It is for this reason that the passion of our blessed Savior, the prophecies relating to, and the circumstances attending it, are the subjects of the epistles and gospels which the Church reads at this time. Therefore the best method of consecrating Holy Week to God, is to accompany the Church by making some mystery or part of Christ's passion, the subject of our private devotions, We have just reason to reflect thus, with gratitude every day of our lives: but to neglect it at this time, would convict us of criminal insensibility, justly deserving reproof. Diversions and entertainments surely may be suspended for a few days, being inconsistent with the serious duties of this week, and should not be thought on, much less sought after.

To commence this holy week in a proper manner, let us this day consider how our blessed Lord disposes himself for his approaching passion.

The time being come when the Son of God had determined to offer himself to his eternal Father, as a sacrifice for the redemption of mankind, he prepares to enter upon the glorious, but bitter stage of his sufferings; and rejoicing as a giant to run his course, carried on by the same ardent love which brought him down from heaven to earth, he made his entrance into Jerusalem, there to complete the great work he had so mercifully begun. He would not make his entry with pomp and show, like worldly princes glittering in gold and silver, but chose to ride upon one of the meanest and most contemptible of beasts. Astonishing sight! Behold the great Lord of the universe enters into Jerusalem, the capital of Judea, riding upon an ass; and though he might have been attended by legions of angels, and have appeared with greater splendor than any of the Roman Cæsars, yet he would not. His attendants are his disciples, a few poor fishermen, and the multitude who went forth to meet him. He enters, it is true, in triumph; but it is to pass from that triumph to an ignominious death. He is ushered in by the loud acclamations of a people, by whom he was within a few days after treated with the greatest barbarity. He thus made his entrance to fulfil the prediction of the prophet Zachary, and to leave the obstinate Jews without an excuse for not acknowledging him to be their

promised Messias, since there was not one of the prophecies concerning him, which had not been fulfilled in the most minute detail.

We should learn from the example of our Lord and Master, to despise the honors of this world. Where providence has placed us in an elevated station, we may lawfully sustain that rank, which is necessary to maintain the respect due to the character we have to support; but without pride or haughtiness, or affection for magnificence and parade. The distinction between us and those of an inferior rank, may give us this useful lesson, that as the difference is not owing to ourselves, but to the bountiful hand of God, we must gratefully acknowledge his gifts, and apply them to his honor and glory; we must have compassion on the poor, and rejoice that it is in our power to relieve their wants. Thus our blessed Savior was not in the least moved by the extraordinary honors paid him by the multitude, or their loud Hosannas, and proclaiming him the Son of David. Drawing near to Jerusalem, he wept tenderly over that unhappy city, bewailed the blindness of that obstinate people, and shed tears of compassion over their impending ruin. Excellent instruction for his followers, not to covet honors and dignities, nor be elated with the praises of men; but to consider ourselves in a true light, mourn over

our weakness and miseries, and sincerely compassionate those of others.

Alas! what reason can we have to place our affections on any object in this world, where every thing is uncertain and subject to vicissitude, or seek the applause of men, which is so fickle and liable to change? The multitude often exclaims against those as unworthy to live, whom a few days before they had extolled above the skies, nay, even deified. Those very Jews, who sung Hosannas to our Savior, and proclaimed him the Son of David, in a few days afterwards exclaimed, Take him away, take him away, crucify him. We will not have this man but Barabbas.

As the ceremony of bearing palms in our hands is symbolical of Christ's triumph over sin and death, so ought it also, in some measure, be a mark of our victory. For, what will it avail us that Christ has overcome the devil, purchased our redemption, and restored us to the glorious liberty of the sons of God, if we do not endeavor to maintain that liberty, but permit ourselves to fall again under his tyranny, by becoming slaves to sin. In order to avoid so great a misfortune, we must consider that whilst we remain in this world we are engaged in a warfare against our spiritual enemies which Jesus Christ has not only overcome, but has left us an example how we may

conquer them. As he is our captain, we must therefore obey his orders, otherwise we shall soon fall into their power. Looking then upon the palms we receive into our hand this day, let their mystical signification inspire us with the generous resolution of combating; for, it is not by thinking or resolving, but by acting, that we can gain the victory, and be entitled to the triumph. A soldier, who resolved to fight his enemy, but when attacked makes little or no resistance, must expect either to be killed or made prisoner: what then can those Christians expect, who resolve to resist the devil, but on the first attack, surrender their arms and submit to his power? Such can claim no share in the solemnity of this day, nor be entitled to any part in Christ's triumph: if they remain slaves under the most cruel of tyrants, they have only to blame their own cowardice; for, however violently the devil may assault us, he cannot prevail, if we are not wanting to ourselves. He may indeed solicit, and allure, but he cannot force us, since we have both free-will and liberty, as well as the grace of God to assist us. He can do us no injury, unless we yield to his temptations; for, if we resist him, he will fly from us, and the more violent his solicitations, the more glorious will be our victory, the more brilliant our rewards. The more wounds a soldier receives, the more illustri-

ous his victories will be, and they will tend to increase his reputation with his prince: so it is in our spiritual combats against the world, the flesh and the devil: the more strenuously we resist them, the sooner we shall overcome them, and the greater will be our recompense. Then may we receive palms here, as pledges of those never-fading crowns of glory we shall receive hereafter.

PRAYER.

Adorable Jesus! permit me with a grateful heart to sing aloud: Blessed art thou, O, son of David. Glory be to thee in the highest. But while I thus desire to partake of thy triumphs, O, let me likewise share in thy victories; and by a faithful resistance, put all my enemies to flight: as thou hast broken my chains, let me never more become a slave to sin, nor rob thee of the fruits of that conquest which cost thee so many labors, and so much blood. Thou hast taught us to despise the fading, the uncertain honors of this world, and by the way of humility, dost conduct us to the everlasting glory of thy heavenly kingdom. O, may thy example be deeply imprinted in my heart, and constantly before my eyes, that I may make it the invariable rule of my conduct! Then shall I know how to be humble, though thy providence may place me in a high

station; or be content with my lot, if thou shalt judge proper to rank me amongst those of the lowest class; for whatever may be my condition here, if I follow thee, I shall be happy hereafter.

Thou, O, dear Redeemer of the world! wast not in the least moved at the loud acclamations of the people, but didst pity their miserable blindness, and shed tears over their impending ruin. Suffer me not to be puffed up with the praises of men, nor value myself upon their applause, but rather eradicate all vain glory and ambition from my heart, that I may seek only to please thee.

O, thou true happiness of my soul! when shall I seek after thee, and adhere to thee alone? Where shall I find what can deserve my love so much as thou dost? Can the world, or any thing it contains, satisfy the demands of a soul that loves thee, and is only created for the enjoyment of thyself? Alas! my God, the world is composed of nothing but vanity and deceit: its honors are empty bubbles; its riches mean and despicable; and its pleasures abominable; when compared to thee, the endless source of all good. O, suffer me not then foolishly to misplace my affections on them: my heart was created only for thee, for thou hast made it for thyself. O, may it never be at rest, till it finally comes to rest in thee, my God.

EASTER SUNDAY.

GOSPEL—*Mark* xvi. 1–7.

At that time: when the sabbath was passed, Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought sweet spices, that coming, they might anoint Jesus. And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they come to the sepulchre, the sun being now risen. And they said one to another: Who shall roll us back the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And looking, they saw the stone rolled back. For it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed with a white robe; and they were astonished. Who saith to them: Be not affrighted; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he is risen, he is not here, behold the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you, into Galilee: there you shall see him, as he told you.

INSTRUCTION.

What the angel said to the holy women, is now declared by the Church to all the faithful, Christ is risen. We are not now called upon,

with an *Ecce Homo*, to behold the Son of God covered with blood and wounds, clothed with a purple garment, and crowned with thorns; but to admire him vested in the resplendent robes of glory and immortality; rising from the grave, by virtue of his divine power: passing through the stone placed before the monument, and filling heaven and earth with joy at his triumphant resurrection. Having lain in the grave to prove himself to have been truly man, and really dead, he now rises by a power which shows him to be truly God. Yes, Christ is risen; and by his resurrection has established this truth, that we also shall one day rise again: and as he, by his resurrection, obtained a new and glorious life, so we also shall rise to a glorious immortality, provided we raise no obstacles in the way. As the resurrection of Christ is the certain pledge of the resurrection of our bodies to a state of immortality hereafter (the most consoling article of our creed), we have great reason to rejoice; for, as the apostle St. Paul observes: If there is no resurrection of the dead, neither is Christ risen again. And if Christ hath not risen again, our teaching is vain. But now Christ hath risen from the dead, the first fruits of those who have slept. For by man indeed came death, and by man the resurrection from the dead. And as in Adam all die, so in Christ all shall be raised to

life again. O, happy effect of Christ's resurrection! which enables us to cry out: O, death where is thy sting? O, grave! where is thy victory? Christ is risen; yes, he is risen for our justification, that we also may rise with him to glory. But, we must first rise to a new, a spiritual life which alone can prepare us for a life of glory. Without thus rising spiritually from sin, we may celebrate the annual festival of our Lord's resurrection, and unite with the Church in her repeated alleluias; but if we proceed no further we shall reap no benefit. Let us not then confine our devotion at this season to external respect; although it is certainly proper that we should on the present occasion testify our gratitude, for the blessings we commemorate, with all religious magnificence, and that the Church should now put on her best attire to celebrate the resurrection of her divine Spouse, but we must be careful to add, the much more valuable interior disposition of the heart, and to the resurrection of Jesus Christ join that of our own, which ought to be modelled after his; for, according to the resemblance our spiritual resurrection bears to his rising from the grave, so far, and no further, will it be to our advantage. The circumstances of Christ's resurrection, and how we are to imitate it, will be a proper subject for our pious reflections.

"Two circumstances present themselves to our thoughts on the resurrection of Jesus Christ: first that the life he then entered upon was a real life; secondly, that it was eternal. It was a real life. The Lord is truly risen. It was eternal. Christ now dies no more. Death has no more dominion over him. Such must be our spiritual resurrection. We must make it evident that we are truly risen. The Lord is truly risen, and has appeared to Simon. To rise and not make our resurrection apparent, is inexplicable; but to appear to have risen, whilst we are still dead, is an hypocritical illusion. Our resurrection must also be permanent, for, having once risen, we must never fall or die again.

Christ, when he rose from the grave, reassumed his natural body, the same in which he was crucified; it was in this, his proper body, that he appeared to his disciples, when he commanded them to touch and feel him, that they might be convinced he had flesh and bones, and was no spirit or phantom: nay to satisfy the incredulity of St. Thomas, he bid him put his hand into the wound of his side, and into the marks in his hands and feet. This reality of our Lord's corporal resurrection, must be the model of our spiritual resurrection. We must truly rise to a new life, and not deceive ourselves or others, by false appearances. As the body of Christ, before his pas-

sion, was subject to cold and heat, hunger and thirst, labor and fatigue, but after his resurrection became impassable, and incapable of suffering; so we, after our spiritual resurrection, must be free from those passions and evil habits to which we were before subject, that it may be truly said of us: behold, such a one is risen, and quite changed. He no longer commits those sins to which he was heretofore subject. He is no more addicted to swearing, lying, drunkenness, passion, &c. He is not as heretofore, cold, indifferent, careless or negligent in the service of God, and the business of salvation. He no longer bears malice, nor seeks revenge; he is no longer hard-hearted nor uncharitable to the poor. Why so? Because he is risen with Christ, and entering upon a new life; he is now become sober, and regular in his conduct; sincere, fervent, and devout, charitable to his neighbors, zealous in the service of God, and earnest in the great affair of his salvation, Ah! these are the happy effects of a spiritual resurrection wherein we must show a new life, and make it obvious that we are truly risen. Happy those Christians who by thus rising with Christ, not only become truly partakers of the solemnity of this time, but receive an assurance of a glorious resurrection to eternal life.

There is another circumstance attending the

resurrection of our blessed Lord, which demands our consideration, the life which he entered upon after he arose from the grave, was permanent. Death had no more dominion over him. Such must be our life after our spiritual resurrection: for what advantage will it be to us to appear as if spiritually risen if we relapse into those criminal habits, and are again subject to the dominion of sin? Having through the grace of God, recovered our liberty, we must maintain our freedom, and by perseverance in the service of God nourish the spirtiual life we have received; to effect this, we must use those means which the goodness of God has provided for our security. We must not be satisfied with an ordinary devotion, or general promises of amendment of our lives, which are soon obliterated from our memories. No, the only way to secure a perseverance in this newness of life, is to follow the advice of St. Paul: "If you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God: mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon earth." When once our hearts are established upon heavenly objects, and our affections are not inordinately placed on the things of this world, the desire of that eternal happiness after which we aspire, will make us careful to secure it, by leading a life of the spirit, —walking in the commandments of God, accord-

ing to the precepts of his holy gospel, and thereon establish that confidence which will at length terminate in the enjoyment of God in eternal bliss.

PRAYER.

O, Jesus! victorious conqueror of sin and death thou didst gloriously rise from the dead, and triumph over the malice of thine enemies, and thereby open the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Grant, dear Lord, that I also may rise from the death of sin to a life of grace; from the cold grave of tepidity, to a life of fervor. O, may I quit the old paths of my vicious habits, to walk in newness of life; that when thou shalt come at the last day, I also may appear with thee in glory. I desire now, O, Savior of the world to celebrate the triumphs of thy glorious resurrection, to praise thy holy name for all the wonders of thy love. O, may that love, dear Lord, operate upon my heart so efficaciously, as to enable me to make a suitable return of love. May I prove the sincerity of my love, by observing thy commands. May I never more offend thee, nor become a slave to sin, but to the last moment of my life continue faithful to thee, my Lord, and my God.

Thou art risen, O, Jesus, my dear and adorable Redeemer! thy sorrows are at an end; thy tears are dried up; thou hast gloriously triumphed

over the cruelty, and the malice of thine enemies. May thy holy name be for ever praised! O, victorious Redeemer of mankind; may all the powers of heaven and earth praise and magnify thy glorious and triumphant resurrection from the grave, whereby thou hast freed us from everlasting death. Thou hast redeemed me by thy precious blood; O, may I never more submit to the slavery of sin. Thou hast broken my chains and set me at liberty; let me never again become a slave to the enemies of my soul. What shall I render thee for so great a mercy? O, that I could make a suitable return for thy love! All thou requirest is, that I would love thee and serve thee; can I refuse what thou so justly deservest, what thou hast purchased with thy precious blood? No, my God! I will love thee with my whole heart above all other things. I will love thee with all possible love, for I can never love thee as much as thou deservest. I will serve thee, my God with the utmost fidelity, and will rather suffer death, then be so ungrateful as to be offend thee. O, that I had a thousand hearts to give thee! a thousand lives to employ in thy service! But what I have, my poor single heart, my whole life I now give, I now entirely consecrate to thy love and service.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL.—*John* XX. 19–31.

At that time: When it was late that same day, the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were gathered together through fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them: Peace be to you. And when he had said this he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore were glad when they saw the Lord. He said therefore to them again: Peace be to you. As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When he had said this, he breathed on them; and he said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them: and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained. Now Thomas, one of the twelve, who is called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him: We have seen the Lord. But he said to them: Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hands into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, his disciples were again within, and Thomas was with them. Jesus cometh, the doors being shut,

and stood in the midst, and said: Peace be to you. Then he said to Thomas: Put in thy fingers hither, and see my hands, and bring hither thy hand, and put into my side; and be not incredulous, but believing. Thomas answered, and said to him: My Lord and my God! Jesus saith to him: because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou believest: blessed are they that have not seen and yet believe. Many other signs also Jesus performed in the sight of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God: and that believing you may have life in his name.

INSTRUCTION.

The appearance of our Divine Redeemer to his disciples, after his glorious Resurrection, is the subject appointed by the gospel of this day for our consideration. He condescended to exhibit to the incredulous Thomas, the wounds in his hands and sacred side and mildly reproved him for his lack of faith.

Christ entered, the doors being shut: he stood in the midst of them: and the disciples were glad, says the Evangelist, when they saw the Lord.

The doors were shut: the timorous disciples being apprehensive of the resentment of the

Jews, or that they might be seized for being the followers of Jesus Christ.

"Amidst their fears, Christ entered, the doors being shut: they were glad when they saw the Lord: his presence instantly dissipated their alarms: beholding him, their hearts were filled with consolation; Peace be to you, were his first words, as if he would have said: Fear not, I am with you: let your hearts be at rest, and your minds at peace. Fear not the Jews. Fear not your enemies, they cannot, shall not hurt you, only at such times as I shall permit them for your good; that by your sufferings for me here, you may rejoice with me in eternal glory hereafter. Peace be to you."

What is more desirable than peace, even in this world? What more dreadful than contention! Oh! how many families, nay, how many nations have been destroyed by discord!

That disagreements should be found among infidels who know not God, is not surprising; but that they should so frequently occur among Christians, is truly astonishing. To behold those who avow themselves the disciples of Jesus Christ attempting to ruin each other is amazing. Surely, they forget the positive command of Jesus Christ, to love one another. Christians of this unhappy disposition, who will not live in peace with their neighbors, can claim no

share in that peace which Christ imparts to his faithful followers.

But, if peace is so desirable in our intercourse with the world, how much more necessary, is the testimony of a good conscience, which St. Paul describes, as the Peace of God, which surpasseth all understanding. This, is the only true, and solid peace: that which the world gives is a deceitful peace. The prophet Jeremiah assures us, that the world and its votaries say: Peace, peace, when there is no peace, and the Holy Scriptures compare sinners to the raging sea: never at rest, but tossed about by the violence of their criminal passions. Hence, Isaias declares, that there is no peace for the wicked.

Not so with the faithful followers of Jesus Christ: they enjoy the happiness of a perfect tranquillity, a peace which the world can neither give, nor take away.

None but the good Christian possesses true peace. He is at peace with God, being in his grace, and consequently in his favor. He is at peace with himself, in the testimony of a good conscience. He is at peace with his neighbor, by promoting his welfare as far as in his power. Oh! what happiness, thus to live in peace. Let us endeavor to acquire, and preserve this blessed peace by loving God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. Let us banish discord, and labor to

preserve our conscience void of offence in the sight of God, and man: in the sight of God, by flying from sin, and all its allurements: in the sight of man, by living an irreproachable life. Then, we may hope to share in that happy peace which Christ gave to his apostles, and prove ourselves worthy to be the children of him, who is the Prince of Peace.

The disciples informed S. Thomas that they had seen the Lord. He replied: Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe—Oh strange incredulity! In St. Thomas we behold the spirit of singularity, a perversion of judgment, and a positive adherence to his own opinions, with the miserable weakness, to make his senses the criterion by which to judge of the things of God. This peculiarity appears, by his leaving the other apostles, and being absent when our Redeemer stood amongst them. He exhibited a petulant disposition when the disciples informed him they had seen the Lord; for, without inquiring into the circumstances, he peremptorily exclaimed: I will not believe. He persevered in his resolution, and demanded ocular demonstration; the testimony of his senses.

The conduct of this apostle, is a picture of those who will assent to nothing but what they

see, and thus make human reason the supreme criterion of the mysteries of religion: hence, the danger of singularity is obvious; from this spirit has arisen those errors! nay, those heresies, that have in every age sprung up in the Church.

The authors of new opinions imagine, that to be singular, is to show more learning, and judgment than others, to advance doctrines which had never been before advanced, and to deny those which are universally believed. They thus appropriate to themselves, the specious characters of freethinkers: or, men possessing strong sense, freedom of thought, and an unbounded liberty! They desire to be distinguished from those, whom they are pleased to designate, the credulous vulgar. Oh! how contrary to those sentiments is that humble obedience of heart, which our Divine Master so sweetly enforces in his answer to the doubting apostle: Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed: Blessed are they, who have not seen and have believed.

The humble and sincere Christian, will captivate his understanding to the obedience of Faith, and require no other proofs than the authority of the word of God, as delivered by the Church. He, will be directed by her pastors, to whom Christ has said: He that hears you, hears me: and he that despises you, despises me.

PRAYER.

O God! thy peace is truly desirable. The world knows it not. O! Thou true repose of my soul, withdraw my heart and my affections from the world and its vanities, that I may adhere to thee alone. Fill my soul with these delights which thou hast prepared for those who love thee: unite me, sweetest Jesus, inseparably to thyself.

O! may I continue faithful to thee; and never deprive myself of that peace which surpasseth all understanding.

O my Lord and my God! shall I presume to question, or refuse to believe thy sacred truths? My God! thy power like thy love is infinite, and far above my comprehension. I adore, and submit myself to thee, my Lord, and my God! I believe all thou hast revealed. Thou art Truth itself. I adore thy infinite goodness in having revealed thy truths to the little ones, and concealed them from the wise of the world.

Full of faith in thy doctrine, and confidence in thy mercy, I will adore and exclaim with thy apostle: My Lord and my God.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL.—*John* x. 11–16.

At that time: Jesus said to the Pharisees: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep. But the hireling and he that is not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf seizeth and scattereth the sheep: and the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling; and he hath no care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd: and I know mine, and mine know me. As the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father: and I lay down my life for my sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

INSTRUCTION.

O how great is the love which Jesus Christ has for his sheep! With how much justice does he style himself the good Shepherd. In every passage of the sacred writings he uses so many endearing expressions, and shows so ardent a desire that we should love him, as would almost induce us to imagine, that it was for his own

interest, and not for our eternal happiness he thus solicits our affections. He is indeed our Sovereign Lord and Master, the Supreme Monarch of Heaven and Earth. We are but his creatures, the work of his hands, and upon him we entirely depend. Yet, he is pleased to assume the engaging titles of Parent, Brother, and Friend, that we may give him our love!

In the gospel of this day, Jesus says, I am a Shepherd, and to prove that he is a good one, he says, that he lays down his life for his sheep, and that he loves them so tenderly as to be willing to suffer death itself for them. How faithfully he proved his love for us, is manifest by his expiring a victim of love upon an ignominious cross, to deliver us from the fatal consequences of original sin, from the power of Satan, from eternal death, and to enable us to become coheirs with Christ, in the kingdom of heaven. Oh, what love is like unto this! Does it not deserve a return of love?

When Christ says, that he is the good Shepherd, and draws the distinction between the genuine pastor, and the hireling, every Christian may reflect upon the station he occupies in the world. Christ, is the universal Shepherd; and all who are in the fold of the Church belong to him. Yet, under him, every Christian may be considered a pastor, or shepherd, with regard to

those who may be subject to him. Thus, all rulers are and should prove themselves shepherds of their people,—prelates and pastors of those souls committed to their care,—parents of their children,—masters and mistresses of their domestics. Rulers are truly shepherds of their people, when they govern with mildness, justice, and equity,—prelates, and pastors, when they diligently discharge their spiritual function,—parents, when they teach their children the love of God and their neighbor,—masters, and mistresses, when they take care that their domestics discharge their religious, and moral duties. Moreover, every man is a pastor, or shepherd, and has at least one sheep committed to his care, and that is, his own immortal soul; which he should guard even with the loss of his life.

The hireling, says the gospel, seeth the wolf coming, leaveth the sheep and flies, and the wolf catcheth them. Alas! how many are there, who abandon their souls, and leave them an easy prey to the devil, the infernal wolf? When unlawful pleasures are to be enjoyed; when worldly advantages are in view: then, is our duty omitted; then, is our poor soul forsaken; then, is she abandoned to her most insatiable enemy. Nay, do we not often refuse the assistance of God, which he offers us by his grace, and the means to obtain it, prayer, and the sacraments. Thus, we prove

ourselves to be hirelings: and yet, the sheep which we abandon to destruction may be truly said to be our own. The soul of every man belongs to him and with his body, it will be eternally happy or miserable. How can he neglect the preservation of that, which is so dear to him? But, neglect perhaps, is not our only crime: we are not only negligent in resisting temptations when they come, we but too often seek them, by not avoiding the occasions which produce them. Oh! wretched depravity of the human heart—strange infatuation! thus to endanger the loss of our immortal souls.

Our Divine Redeemer, in the language of the gospel says, I know mine, and mine know me. His faithful followers know him, not only by a speculative knowledge or faith in him, but by a practical observance of his divine commandments. To believe in Christ, to be members of the Catholic Church, necessarily obliges us to hear his voice, through our authorized pastors, and totally disregard the solicitations of strangers, who seek to draw us from him. We must not submit to the world which would entice us into the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Nor must we attend to the suggestions of our corrupt nature, to leave the narrow way of the gospel, to walk in the deceitful paths of sensual pleasures. Oh, Christians! let us follow Jesus Christ, the only

true Shepherd of our souls. To do this is truly to know him. Then shall we be known by him: he will acknowledge us to be his sheep, to belong to his flock, and he will place us amid the green pastures, and by the still waters, abounding in all delights, where there will be for ever one fold and one Shepherd.

PRAYER.

O, adorable Jesus! the true Shepherd, and Pastor of our souls! What love, and tenderness hast thou not shown to us. Thou camest upon earth, endured torments, and suffered death, even the death of the Cross, that we might live happy with thee forever. O, dear Lord! how excessive is thy goodness. What return shall I make? Oh! may daily, and hourly aspirations of a sincere, and reciprocal love, ascend from my heart. May I show every moment, a grateful sense of thy favors, by endeavoring to love thee more and more.

O, Jesus the good Shepherd! who hast given me a soul that I should save it, a soul purchased with thy precious blood: suffer me not to be as a hireling. O suffer me not to be careless of the important trust which thou hast committed to my charge: it is my own sheep, it is my own soul which if I lose I will be forever miserable.

Ah my God! with shame and confusion, I ac-

knowledge that I have been negligent: that I have fled, when I beheld the wolf coming: nor have I resisted as I ought. Dear Lord! for the time yet to come, give me grace to be careful, and solicitous for what is my own. Inspire me with courage, and resolution, to resist the enemies of my soul, and grant me thy divine assistance to overcome them.

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL.—*John* xvi. 16–22.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples:—A little while, and ye will not see me: and again a little while, and you will see me: because I go to the Father. Then some of his disciples said one to another: what is this that he saith to us: A little while and you will not see me: and again a little while, and you will see me, and because I go to the Father? They said therefore: What is this that he saith: A little while? we know not what he speaketh. And Jesus knew that they had a mind to ask him; and he said to them: Of this do you inquire among yourselves, because I said: A little while, and you will not see me: and again a little while and you will see me. Truly, truly, I say to you, that you shall

lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be made sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in labor, hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also you now indeed have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice; and your joy no man shall take from you.

INSTRUCTION.

A little while and you will not see me; and again a little while, and you shall see me. Mysterious, but most instructive words! Whilst we live in this world we behold Jesus Christ only through faith; hereafter, we shall see, and enjoy him forever in heaven, provided, we fail not to cooperate with his merciful designs.

Ah! how consoling a reflection for every faithful soul! A reflection, that should induce us to improve every instant of our lives, which St. James compares to a vapor, which appears and vanishes in a moment.

Time is precious, because purchased by the blood of Jesus Christ. Time is precious, because it is given us to work out our salvation: in each moment of time, me may merit heaven. Time is short: what is past is nothing: or as if it never

had been.—Time to come is not our own: we cannot promise ourselves one moment. The present time is but a moment: on this moment may depend an eternity. Ah! what would not the souls in hell give for a moment in which they might repent.

Time is irrevocable: it cannot be recalled. What shall we do, who have mispent so much? We must redeem it by repentance. God gives us time to appease his anger, and offer satisfaction to his injured justice. He tells us: Now is the acceptable time. Hereafter there will be no time for us.

You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice, are words addressed by our Divine Redeemer to all Christians. It is the legacy he has left to his disciples. To suffer is to become like him, who chose to suffer upon earth. His whole life, from his birth in a stable at Bethlehem to his death on a cross on Mount Calvary, was an uninterrupted series of sufferings. It behooved Christ to suffer, and so to enter into his glory. And shall we, who profess to be his disciples, expect to be exempt? If we desire to be with Christ in heaven, we must first suffer with him on earth. Let us with St. Paul, glory in the Cross of Christ; that is, by suffering according to the will of God, by which the world is crucified to us, and we to the world.

The world shall rejoice, indeed, says Christ. But, let that not trouble us. Sinners may rejoice for a short time in the enjoyments of transitory pleasures, but as they are counterfeit goods, they bring false and fleeting gratifications, generally succeeded by remorse. We have no reason surely to envy the partizans of the world. They rather deserve our compassion, and our tears.

If we judge of things only by appearance, and behold the world through the false mirror which corrupt nature presents to our view, it would appear beautiful, and fascinating; its pleasures animate us with the desire of obtaining them, and cause us to rejoice in their possession. But if we consider the world as it really is, how different will it then appear! How vain, and empty all its honors. Its riches how deceitful! Pleasures how transitory! Considerations like these, will persuade us to prefer the service of a beneficent God though attended with privations, to the alluring, but treacherous vanities of a deceitful world.

If we follow Christ, though we lament and weep, our sorrow will soon be turned into joy. I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you is the consoling assurance of truth itself, if, by the goodness of our lives, we can save our immortal souls. The sorrows incident to this life will shortly terminate: the most excruciating pains will cease with

death. Our afflictions will be succeeded by an eternity of happiness: therefore let us rejoice and be glad, because your reward will be great in the kingdom of heaven: a reward not for a few days, months or years, but for an endless eternity. A little while and you shall see me, your hearts shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you.

Not so, the followers of this world, their present joys, shall be turned into everlasting sorrows. They lead their lives in mirth and jollity and in a moment after death descend into hell! Alas! their laughter will he changed into mourning, and their mirth into fruitless tears. Melancholy conclusion of a sinful life. O, foolish, and inconsiderate sinners! where are the sensual pleasures, the riches, and honors: which you esteemed more than the salvation of your immortal souls? Attend, while it is yet time, to what is said by the sacred writer: How is the land become desolate, because there is none who considereth in his heart? Oh! that men were wise, and that they would understand, and would provide for their latter end. What consolations would they not derive amidst the evils of this life; what patience and resignation under the dispensations of God; what hope of obtaining in the world to come, the fulfilment of the promise made by our Divine Redeemer to his faithful followers, your sorrow shall be turned into joy, and your joy no one shall take from you.

PRAYER.

How valuable is time! without time all other things are as nothing. Honors, riches, pleasures are of no value to those, who leave the world almost as soon as they enter it. O, my God, the bountiful author of all good! grant that we may esteem the precious moments, thou art pleased to bestow upon us, to prepare for eternity. Permit us not to experience the desolate end of the unhappy sinners. At all times, but particularly at our last moments, take us under thy protection, that we may not fear death. Oh! what happiness my soul! for transient sufferings here to obtain eternal glory hereafter. Come, gracious Lord, come quickly! my soul longs to behold, and enjoy thee for ever. May my soul die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his. O Lord, make us in all things conformable to thy will, that when released from the miseries of this world, we may be worthy through thy mercy, to enter into the possession of those joys which are eternal.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL.—*John* xvi. 5–14.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: I go to him who sent me: and none of you asketh me: Whither goest thou? But because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow hath filled your heart. But I tell you the truth: it is expedient for you that I go: for if I go not, the Paraclete will not come to you: but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin and of justice, and of judgment. Of sin: because they believe not in me. And of justice: because I go to the Father; and you shall see me no longer. And of judgment: because the prince of this world is already judged. I have yet many things to say to you: but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall teach you all truth. For he will not speak of himself; but whatever things he had heard, he will speak: and the things that are to come he shall show you. He will glorify me: because he will receive of mine, and shall show it you.

INSTRUCTION.

In this day's gospel, our Divine Redeemer

mildly reproves his apostles for not asking him where he would go after leaving them. He had frequently intimated that he was to leave them: that a little while they should not see him. Yet, they expressed no solicitude to know, whither he was going!

The indifference manifested by the apostles, is alas! shown by too many Christians, who never ask that momentous question: Whither goest thou? Nevertheless, it is of the utmost importance not only to ask, but also to know, whither we are going: and how we may arrive in safety, at the end of our journey. These are most interesting subjects: they demand our most serious attention.

Time passes. Life hastens to an end. We are all going—but whither? To Eternity! that is, to another life that will never end: to possess endless happiness; or, suffer eternal misery. Which road have we taken? are we upon that which leads to heaven, or are we heedlessly marching on the broad way that leads to hell? Let us reflect upon this topic in a temper of mind suitable to its consequences.

We are every moment advancing towards death: and it is our interest, no less than our duty, to prepare for that event. There is nothing more efficacious, than the frequent consideration, that every day we approach nearer to the place

whither we are going. Oh! that men were wise: that they would consider their last end, that Christians would examine themselves, and inquire, why they were created, redeemed, and sanctified. Why! but to know, to love, and to serve God faithfully here, and be happy with him forever hereafter.

The knowledge, and practice of these duties, would enable every sincere Christian, to await the approach of death with an humble confidence in the mercy, and goodness of God: but to those, who are inordinately attached to sinful pleasures, who do not desire to leave their evil ways, who are assured by the Scriptures, and experience, that a time will come, when they must be separated from all worldly objects, these are become so infatuated, that they never ask their souls whither are we going.

To believe in a future state of rewards and punishments, is a fundamental article of our holy religion; that is to say, if we live virtuously, we shall be eternally happy; if viciously, eternally miserable: hence, it is of the first importance for us to know, whither we are going? Whether, by the rectitude of our conduct, we hope to obtain a seat amongst the blessed in perpetual happiness; or, from the depravity of our hearts, and the impurity of our lives, we have reason to fear we shall be numbered amongst the

reprobate, and suffer with them, amidst everlasting torments.

The Holy Ghost will convince the world of sin, because they have not believed in me. In these words we are assured by our Divine Redeemer, that the infidel, and the unfaithful Christian, will each receive the reward of his impiety. He will accuse the former, of refusing to submit his understanding to the obedience of Faith: and the latter, of crucifying again the Lord of Glory, by the perpetration of those sins which were the cause of his death. If a mere speculative belief in what Christ has taught: if a mere assent to, or acknowledgment of, the truths of our holy religion were sufficient many would be safe who are now in the most imminent danger. But St. Paul assures us, that to attain salvation we must be enlivened by faith, that worketh by charity, that is, by good works, without which faith is dead. Do we believe? The devils believe, and tremble! Have not wicked Christians just reason to tremble, or are they more insensible than demons!

The Holy Ghost will accuse impious Christians of practical infidelity: because, they have not believed in Jesus Christ by the observance of his precepts. The punishment reserved for these, will be more severe, than for those who have never known him as their Redeemer. Oh! Chris-

tians, consider this all-important subject, with the attention its importance demands.

If you believe in Jesus Christ: if you acknowledge him, for your Lord and Master: prove that you are truly his disciples, by a faithful observance of all that he commands: do not insult: do not crucify the Lord of Glory, by your sins: do not oblige him to accuse you of ingratitude, or to convince you of sin. But, if you will not be persuaded to reflect upon these momentous truths; if you will not attend to advice fraught with such awful consequences with regard to your eternal salvation, you may perhaps perceive your folly, when too late, to prevent your irremediable ruin.

The judgment which succeeds death, will be strict; it will be severe: our own conscience will accuse, and convict us. Who is there that will not tremble, on hearing the denunciation of Jesus Christ, Depart from me you that work iniquity! I know you not. Can we remain indifferent? Can we refrain from asking the question, Whither goest thou? O my Soul! whither goest thou?

Let us resolve to promote our interest, and perform our duty; let us resolve seriously to apply ourselves to the service of God, and to the salvation of our souls. The Holy Ghost will teach you all truth! This gracious promise made by our Divine Redeemer to his Church, is

ample authority for us to place implicit reliance upon her decision when she declares, that the Holy Spirit will come upon all those who love him, to direct, and assist them, to enlighten their understanding, to confirm their faith, to enable them to overcome the temptations of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and that by the grace of final perseverance, he will conduct them to the kingdom of Heaven. Can we hesitate, I say, or refuse to love so good a God? What sentiments of gratitude should inflame our hearts when we are convinced, that God has no need of us, but that his paternal care proceeds from a desire of our eternal happiness! What base ingratitude, not to love him, who has so loved us, as to give his own life for our redemption! Oh! can we offend him by sin? can we deliberately make him become our inexorable judge, to condemn us forever? Oh! It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

PRAYER.

My soul! whither goest thou? to the end of life. We must bid a long adieu to all terrestrial objects. Death will come: it will soon meet us. Oh, thou the eternal Author of all things! The supreme sovereign Lord of life and death, impress upon my mind, the remembrance of my last end, that I may frequently consider, whither I am

going. I know, O Lord! that if I pursue a life of virtue, I will be fortified at the approach of death, which is but a short passage to eternal life. I confess, my adorable Redeemer! that I have reason to tremble, when I consider how ungrateful, and disobedient I have been to thee: with what justice thou mayest convince me of sin! but confiding in thy mercy, and goodness, I beg thy grace to enable me to begin to live to thee, that henceforward thou mayest be the only subject of my thoughts, the only object of my desires.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL.—*John* xvi. 23–30.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Truly, truly, I say to you: if you ask the Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. Hitherto you have not asked anything in my name. Ask and you shall receive; that your joy may be full. These things I have spoken to you in proverbs. The hour cometh when I will no more speak to you in proverbs, but will show you plainly of the Father. In that day you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you, that I will ask the Father for you. For the Father himself loveth you, because you have loved me, and have

believed that I came forth from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples say to him: Behold now thou speakest plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now we know that thou knowest all things, and thou needest not that any man should ask thee. By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

INSTRUCTION.

It having been the design of our blessed Lord to impress upon the minds of his disciples the advantage of prayer, he assures them, that whatever they ask in his name, they would receive. As prayer is a duty every one ought to practise, our reflections upon this gospel will be to consider the necessity of complying, and the benefits resulting from a faithful discharge of this important duty.

The necessity of prayer is evident, from our indispensable dependance on God: for, of ourselves we are poor, weak, and miserable creatures: exposed to innumerable spiritual, and temporal dangers: our necessities are so numerous, that were it not for the preserving hand of him, who made us, we should inevitably perish. This salutary dependance we acknowledge, in that admirable prayer composed by our

Divine Master himself, wherein we beseech him to give us this day our daily bread, that is, the sustenance necessary for the preservation of our souls, and bodies. Hence, to resist, and overcome the temptations of our spiritual enemies, we require the constant assistance of the grace of Almighty God, which being his free gift, is not to be obtained but by prayer, and the use of the sacraments, the ordinary channels of Divine Grace. If we examine our hearts, what do we find but evil inclinations, irregular appetites, and unmortified passions. How frequently are we overcome by temptations? how often enticed by objects that flatter the senses, or gratify illicit desires! But, how are we to be delivered from these dangers? By the grace of God; which is not to be obtained but by reducing to practice the advice of our dear Redeemer. Ask and you shall receive. We cannot flatter ourselves, that he will bestow upon us his graces, unless we seek them in the manner he has commanded. Let us learn our own weakness, and the necessity of having frequent recourse to God. Let us imitate King Josophat, and daily cry out with him, O Lord! whereas, we are ignorant what to do, this only we have left, that we direct our eyes to thee! If we do not petition we will not be delivered. If, in danger, we will not ask for assistance, do we not deserve to receive the punish-

ment due to our folly and ingratitude? Hear our Divine Redeemer addressing each of us, whilst weeping over unhappy Jerusalem. How often would I have gathered together thy children, as the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings, and thou wouldst not! Can Christians longer remain insensible to his loving invitation! Can we longer refrain from imploring him in the words of St. Peter, Lord save us, we perish!

The advantages to be derived from prayer are obvious and important; so, too, is the obligation imposed upon all Christians, of discharging it faithfully.

That which is performed with reluctance, is seldom profitable; but, when advantage follows necessity, the labor is made agreeable. This is the general opinion of mankind in temporal affairs. A reflection upon this point as regards our spiritual duties, would induce us, to comply with the obligation of prayer: and none but those, who are altogether indifferent for the salvation of their souls, will neglect the performance of a duty so momentous.

Numerous, and important, are the benefits received through prayer. By it, we obtain the assistance of God, in all our spiritual, and temporal necessities. By it, we are reconciled to God, and receive the pardon of our sins. By it, we are protected from the assaults of our enemies

the devil, the world, and the flesh. By prayer, we obtain grace; advance in every virtue; hope for final perseverance, and eternal happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

If these are the advantages attending prayer, are not those who neglect it, altogether inexcusable? Some allege the want of time. But, they can find time for business, recreation, or pleasure: and yet, oh unhappily, they neglect the pursuit of that object, for which they were created; the salvation of their immortal souls! Oh! may not these tremble at the dreadful denunciation pronounced by the Son of God, upon those who reject his divine admonition. You shall die in your sin!

But, what is more pleasing, and consoling than prayer? By it, we hold sweet converse with our dearest friend, with God himself; to whom, we may at all times have recourse; before whom, we may pour forth our souls; admire, and adore his infinite perfections; praise him for his goodness, and mercy; contemplate his boundless love, and present to him our hearts inflamed with faith, hope, charity, and thanksgiving! These are the generous sentiments of a soul animated with the spirit of God.

Our Blessed Savior having exhorted his disciples to pray, he also instructed them how to perform that important duty. If you ask the

Father anything in my name, he will give it to you. That is, if you petition in his name, for that which will promote the glory of God, and the salvation of souls: if you supplicate the Almighty with respect and humility, your prayers will be answered. With respect; for prayer being an address to the supreme Lord of heaven and earth, a conviction of the dignity of his Divine Majesty, should excite in us sentiments of the most profound reverence. With humility; for there is no sacrifice more acceptable to God than that of a contrite and humble heart. He resists the proud, but gives his grace to the humble. It was humility that exalted the Blessed Virgin, to the dignity of being the mother of God. It was humility, that justified the publican. It was the humility of the Son of God, that redeemed the world. It is humility, that fills heaven with saints. With fervor, and perseverance, that is, if you zealously implore the grace, and love of God, by an unshaken constancy in prayer; and an humble confidence, that God will grant your petitions. With faith, which is the foundation of all virtue. Faith, opens to our view the knowledge of God, and of ourselves: it is the reason of our hope: it excites our love: it enables us to persevere, by assuring us, that a light and momentary tribulation, works in us above measure, an eternal weight of glory. We

must pray with attention: for devotion does not consist, in repeating a multitude of prayers; but, in offering them with hearts animated by the spirit of God; without which, the wise man styles our labor, a sacrifice of fools. We must pray with patience and submission: that when it pleases God, he may grant us the object of our petitions, or that which he considers most beneficial for us to receive. We must pray with a perfect purity of intention: that our prayers may become an agreeable odor before God, and that we may not be among those who ask and receive not, because they ask amiss, but imitating the example of our Divine Redeemer, who when supplicating the Most High, concluded with these words: My Father, not my will, but thine be done! Then will your prayers become an agreeable sacrifice. Then you may hope to be worthy to pray to your God, to ask, and it shall be given to you.

PRAYER.

Adorable Redeemer of the world! how condescending art thou to us poor creatures: thou permittest us, to have recourse to thee, at all times: nay, thou dost even solicit us to come to thee, and dost promise to receive us: thou desirest we should ask, and dost assure us, we shall receive.

Dear, and bountiful Lord! shall I be so unhappy as to omit a duty so advantageous, as that of prayer? No, dearest Savior of my soul! I will make it my daily exercise. Oh, my Lord! grant me the grace of devotion, that I may love to converse with thee, in holy prayer. Infuse into my heart every virtue: inflame it with thy divine presence that my petitions may be always acceptable to thee. O Lord God! the supreme Master of my soul, how endearing are the ways of thy love? thou hast said thy delight is to be with the sons of men. Oh! give us thy grace faithfully to comply with the injunctions of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, to pray without ceasing: that we may be enabled to overcome the combined enemies of our souls. And when time shall be no more for us, do thou in thy mercy bestow upon us, the reward of a virtuous life in the kingdom of heaven, that in the possession of thee, our joy may be full.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER EASTER.

GOSPEL.—*John* xv. 26; xvi. 1–4.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: When the Paraclete cometh whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who

proceedeth from the Father, he will give testimony of me: and you shall give testimony, because you are with me from the beginning. These things have I spoken to you, that you may not be scandalized. They will cast you out of the synagogues: yea the hour cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he offereth homage to God. And these things will they do to you, because they have not known the Father, nor me. But these things I have told you: that when their hour shall come, you may remember that I told you.

INSTRUCTION.

The apostles having been informed by our Divine Redeemer, that he was about to leave them, were filled with sorrow. To be deprived of his divine presence amidst the trials and persecutions they were to undergo, overwhelmed them with grief, and dismay. But, to console them, the compassionate Jesus promised to send the Holy Ghost, the Comforter: who should be their solace, and support, under every temptation and affliction.

Our Savior frequently mentions the Holy Ghost, as the Paraclete: the Comforter: the Spirit of Truth. As the Paraclete, he would bestow upon them that peace, which the world can neither give, nor take away. As the Comforter,

he would enable them to support their afflictions with resignation, and confidence. As the Spirit of Truth; he would be to them a faithful guide; and bring to their recollection all things the Lord had said to them. The promise of the Holy Spirit, was not confined to the apostles: but extended also, to their successors, the prelates and pastors of the church, to enable them to instruct the faithful in every truth, and preserve them from all error.

The Holy Ghost, is the comforter of all pious Christians: he animates our faith, raises our hope, and perfects our charity. He is our teacher, inculcating submission to the authority of the church. By teaching us to follow the spiritual guides he has placed over us, and by the infusion of the virtues of humility, and obedience, he preserves us from the paths of error. Oh Christians! how shall we sufficiently bless, and thank God for his goodness: not only to his Church in general, but to each individual, for thus presenting the efficacious means of obtaining the knowledge of the true faith; of confessing it in our conversation; proving its excellence by the purity of our lives; and of possessing that hope which confoundeth not, because the charity of God is poured forth into our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.

Our dear Redeemer warned his apostles, that

sufferings were to be their portion here, for an eternal weight of glory hereafter. That therefore, they should prepare for the combat, armed with resolution, patience, and fortitude. To enable them to succeed, he promised to send upon them the Holy Ghost, who should bring to their remembrance whatsoever he had said to them. He also told them that they should be cast out of the synagogue: be hated by the world: and even suffer death by the hands of men, who imagined they thereby rendered a service pleasing unto God. Nevertheless, he desires them not to fear, for that he would send his Holy Spirit upon them, against which the combined powers of earth and hell, should not prevail, and that those who should persevere to the end, would be saved.

The apostles received the admonitions of their Divine Master, with implicit submission. They had left all, to follow Jesus Christ: therefore, obedience was less a duty, than a delight. After having received the Holy Ghost, they feared not threats, stripes, or prisons: and their teaching has gone forth into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the earth. Having planted the Christian faith on the ruins of a false worship, they yielded their lives as a testimony of the truth, and sealed with their blood the doctrine they had received from their Divine Redeemer.

Whilst we admire the supernatural courage

and constancy of these humble, these holy men, through whose agency the Almighty was pleased to establish his Church, to be members of which, is our happiness; let us be firmly impressed with the conviction, that if we desire to follow Jesus Christ, in spirit and in truth, we must be prepared to suffer; we must renounce every evil inclination; subdue every inordinate passion; and undergo even death itself, rather than offend our good, our merciful God. If we persevere to the end in the faithful discharge of our respective duties, we may hope to participate in that glorious beatitude promised by our Savior in his admirable discourse upon the mountain: Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

Come, O Holy Ghost! Come, O Holy Spirit of Truth! and enrich my soul with thy seven-fold gifts: enable me to bear testimony of the truth, by walking with God: make my heart a habitation worthy of Divine Majesty: adorn it with all those graces which can render it acceptable to thee: do thou enable me to perform what thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest. Every good comes from thee, for thou art the source of all good, if there is any thing of good in us: Not to us, O Lord! Not unto us, but to thy

name be all the glory. For, thou art the principle, the beginning, and the end, of all good. O Divine Spirit! come, and remain in my soul, make not a transient visit, but permanently establish thyself in my heart; enable me to resist, and overcome, the enemies of my soul: all worldly affections, and inordinate love of creatures. Oh, come! and by thy divine power sanctify, purify, and preserve my soul. Come, dear Lord! and teach us all truth, that we may walk in the paths of thy commandments.

PENTECOST SUNDAY.

GOSPEL.—*John* xiv. 23–31.

At that time Jesus said to his disciples: If any one love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and will make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my words. And the word which you have heard, is not mine; but the Father's who sent me. These things have I spoken to you, abiding with you. But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor

let it be afraid. You have heard that I said to you: I go away, and I come unto you. If you loved me, you would indeed be glad, because I go to the Father: for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass: that when it shall come to pass, you may believe. I will not now speak many things with you. For the prince of this world cometh, and in me he hath not anything. But that the world may know, that I love the Father: and as the Father hath given me commandment; so do I: Arise, let us go hence.

INSTRUCTION.

But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I have said to you. Witness in this promise of our Savior, and its fulfilment the love that he bore for his apostles and all those for whom he was about to suffer. On the night before he suffered, on the very last opportunity he would have for speaking to the apostles he made them this promise. Even in the very shadow of death he was mindful of them and wished to do all he could do to make them strong and perfect in the faith that he had come on earth to establish. He was about to be put to death, and the new Church which he had established was to be in

their care. He had made them many promises, some of which had already been fulfilled, and now he tells them that the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, will tell them all things, and will bring to their minds whatsoever he may have told them about the government of the new Church, and whatsoever else might be useful to them in the affairs of their eternal salvation. And how fully he kept the promise that he had made is amply attested in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read that: When the days of Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place: and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them: and they were filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

And what a wonderful transformation took place on that day! There were the apostles, craven, weak, vacillating men, gathered in that room for fear of the Jews: fearful lest the same fate that was meted out to the Savior would be their portion also. Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, who had but a short time before sworn that he would not deny the Christ, had denied him before the maid-servant. The others had fled or at least had de-

serted the Master when he was about to be put to death, and yet they were the men who were to establish the new economy of Christ on earth. They were to be the foundation stones of the new edifice that he was about to erect, but before the coming of the Paraclete they would have been but sorry leaders of the new religion. But the Holy Ghost the Paraclete whom the Son was sending in the name of the Father was now descending on them, and from cowardly men they were about to become the leaders that countless thousands would follow, and under the guidance of the Holy Ghost were about to establish the true Church of Christ, outside of which there is to be no salvation.

And hardly had the Paraclete descended on them when Peter went forth and began to preach Christ crucified. And amongst the very first things that he told his hearers was that they should: Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And as the coming of the Holy Ghost is about to take place to-day as it did on the first Pentecost Sunday, though in an entirely different form, it would behoove us to prepare our souls for his coming, so that the Spirit of Truth may confirm us in his grace, and grant us all the spiritual favors of which we may stand in need.

How then are we to prepare for the coming of the Holy Ghost? The proper and I might add the only way to prepare for his coming is to remove from your hearts anything that you have reason to think would be objectionable to him. Is not that the very first thing that you would do if you were about to prepare for the visit of a great potentate or even for that of a dear friend? Anything that might prove objectionable would for the time being at least be removed from sight, lest by any chance the enjoyment of the visitor might thereby be lessened. And so too is it with the Holy Ghost: he desires that you remove by a good sincere confession, and a hearty contrition, all past transgressions, and any all the stains of sin that might have been in your soul, for sin is the one great enemy of the Holy Ghost. Its presence in our souls grieves him, and forces him to withdraw his light from us: it weakens the charity he has infused into our hearts: it is contrary to all his designs, for he it is who gives us grace, just as surely as it was the Father who created us and the Son who redeemed us. Remove all sin, and all affection for it, for it never can be reconciled with him who is the very perfection of holiness.

The spirit of the world is another obstacle to the presence and reign of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, for there can be no fellowship between

light and darkness. The gospel tells us that when Christ was promising to send the Paraclete to the apostles that they were not of the world as he was not of it, and if he was so emphatic in stating that the apostles were not of the world can we not see that we too should endeavor to free ourselves from the spirit of the world if we expect to hold communion with the spirit of God. Take the world as it exists to-day ; take the world in which you live and have your being, and can you find in it any thing God-like ; any thing on which you would wish to pattern your lives. Would you be satisfied to have the messenger of death overtake you at your daily toil, or rather would you not wish for some few moments of preparation? And as it is the meeting with God that makes death so terrible, and it is the fear that we would not be prepared to meet him which so terrifies us that we do not want to die unprepared, so too should that same thought animate us when we are about to meet the Holy Ghost the third person of the Blessed Trinity on this, Pentecost Sunday.

As a proper means for meeting the Holy Ghost you should try to act on the advice given by our Lord and Savior when he was about to ascend into heaven, for at that time he said to the apostles : Stay you in the city till you be indued with virtue from above. Leaving the Mount of Olives

the apostles repaired to the cenacle, and there in union with Mary, they persevered in prayer till the Holy Ghost descended upon them. What a grand example for us! We can follow this advice and need not retire to an upper chamber to do it; we can pray and can pray earnestly in the sanctuary of our hearts, and we can pray in union and in the name of Mary the Immaculate Mother of God.

The Scriptures tell us of the wonderful change that took place in the apostles, and if we prepare properly for his coming there will be a very radical change in many of us. True it is that the Paraclete will not be ushered in with a mighty wind, but he will surely come into our hearts this day if we be worthy and shall fill them with his heavenly graces. There was but one act of creation; there was but one Incarnation and redemption; in fact all the great mysteries of religion have been unique; never have any of them been repeated; never shall any of them be repeated; none but the mystery of our sanctification which goes on daily, hourly, even momentarily, through the merits of Jesus Christ and the Paraclete. Let us try then to show our appreciation of all that God has done for us, and from our hearts let us storm heaven that the Paraclete whom the Father will send in the name of the Son, may take up his abode in our hearts and fill them with all his choice graces and blessings.

PRAYER.

Come, O Holy Ghost, and fill the hearts of thy faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of thy love. And as on the first Pentecost Sunday thou didst descend on the apostles and fill them with thy seven-fold gifts, so to-day descend upon all thy faithful, and vouchsafe to them the same gifts according to their varying necessities, and thy unbounded generosity. Give us the gift of understanding, not that we may solve abstruse metaphysical questions, nor even the power to understand our fellow men that we might benefit thereby, but the grace to understand in a finite way some of the attributes of God, so that we may thus realize all that he has done for us. Give us the gift of knowledge; a knowledge of the world that we may see how vain and transitory are its pleasures, and that there is nothing enduring but heaven; give us a knowledge of ourselves so that we may see our faults and correct them, and thus do something for our eternal salvation. Bestow upon us the gift of counsel so that we may advise prudently all under our care, and point out to them and to ourselves the way we should walk if we are to be the real friends of God. Give us the gift of wisdom which is nothing else than a contempt for the things of this world and which will enable us to practice virtue and to profit by

the trials that you may see fit to send us, and offer them up Job-like for the greater glory of God. But above all things give us the gift of piety which shall enable us to look upon God, not as a judge whose severity makes us tremble, but as a most kind and indulgent Father to whom we may go in all our trials to obtain relief. But if the gift of piety is necessary for us, O God, so too is the gift of fear, a fear lest we might commit sin, and thus offend thee who hast been so lavish to us with thy graces and blessings. And as a last request, O, Holy Spirit, allow me to ask for the gift of fortitude by which I shall be enabled to overcome all temptations by which the devil, the world and the flesh may assail me. Grant to us all the graces that we may need to keep the word of God, that we may know, love, and serve him in this world, and be happy with him forever in the next.

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

OR TRINITY SUNDAY.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* vi. 36, 41.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and you shall not be judged.

Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you; good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over shall they give into your bosom. For with the same measure that you shall mete withal it shall be measured to you again. And he spoke also to them a similitude: Can the blind lead the blind? do they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master: but every one shall be perfect, if he be as his master. And why seest thou the mote in thy brother's eye; but the beam that is in thy own eye thou considerest not? or how canst thou say to thy brother: Brother, let me pull the mote out of thy eye, when thou thyself seest not the beam in thy own eye? Hypocrite, cast first the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye.

INSTRUCTION.

Our Divine Redeemer, never impressed upon us a precept more strongly, than that of fraternal charity. By this the world shall know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. This is the true characteristic of his faithful disciples. The consideration of this precept demands our serious attention.

Mercy is the favorite attribute of the Al-

mighty. He delights to show compassion to the sons of men. Every moment he gives abundant proofs of his tenderness, and love. He exhorts us to be perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect, that we being merciful, may hope to imitate in some degree his divine perfections. As he is merciful, we also must be merciful to each other, without distinction, or limitation: without regard to friends, or enemies. Our clemency must extend to all mankind; it must be apparent not only in forgiving offenses, but in a liberal dispensation of those favors, which God has placed at our disposal. But, alas! how different is the conduct of but too many Christians: who, instead of forgiving those who have injured, or offended them, exact satisfaction with the utmost rigor. Can these persons deserve the appellation of Christians? They may indeed usurp the name: but is there not reason to think that to such Christ will say at the last judgment, Depart from me, I know ye not.

How powerful are the motives which induce us to practice the divine virtue of charity. How ample are the rewards promised, for the faithful performance of this God-like attribute. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Forgive and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you. As you have done it to one of these the least of my brethren, you did it

unto me. Come and possess the kingdom prepared for you.

Our duty, and our interest, are here so intimately blended, that we cannot omit the one, without inflicting a serious injury upon the other. We are commanded to forgive those, who trespass against us, that we may be delivered from evil. Hence it follows, that unless we forgive all mankind, we cannot expect to receive that mercy from our God, which alone can preserve us from eternal death.

Charity to the poor, is also a duty enjoined by the gospel. A cheerful alacrity, to assist those who require our aid. A benevolent generosity, according to our means, and a tender compassion, for their misfortunes, mark the true disciples of Jesus Christ; who, on being solicited by the Centurion, to cure his servant, said I, will come and heal him. He, is the good Samaritan, pouring oil, and wine, into our wounded souls.

Oh! Christians: if our dear Redeemer, has given us so many vivid examples in his own divine person, can we hesitate to practice a duty so essential to our eternal happiness? can we refuse to do unto others, as we should wish they should do unto us?

Amongst all the virtues which shine with so much luster in the lives, and actions, of the illustrious saints, none is more conspicuous, than

love for our neighbor, for in their fellow-men they recognized the image of their Redeemer, who has declared, that Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

To God alone, belongs the prerogative to judge man: because, he alone can search the hearts of men. He has established tribunals to administer his justice; those who are not invested with that authority are admonished in the gospel for this day; Judge not, and you shall not be judged: condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. If we presume rashly, to judge another man's servant, when it is to his own master he must stand or fall, with what severity may we not expect judgment from God, for our irreverence, and disobedience. If we would consider attentively, our numerous, and perhaps, our own heinous faults, we would seldom judge, much less condemn our neighbor. Our Divine Redeemer says, Hypocrites, cast first the beam out of thine eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to take out the mote from thy brother's eye. Why do we deprive our neighbor of that esteem, which it is his right to demand of us? surely, it is not loving him, as ourselves: it is not recognizing in him, the image of God: but it clearly shows a want of charity, and exhibits the depravity of a proud, and perhaps, a malicious heart, from whence this enormous evil proceeds. Hencefor-

ward, let us put the best construction upon our neighbor's actions, for the law of God requires it, and on an impartial examination of ourselves, we will find much to judge, and to condemn.

PRAYER.

O, my God, and most merciful Father! who dost delight to show mercy unto men, impress upon my heart an ardent desire to love all mankind. Thou, who hast created me after thine own likeness, do not, I beseech thee, permit me to deface, much less obliterate from my soul thy sacred image, by malice, animosity, or rancor towards my neighbor. Oh! may I love my friends in thee: my enemies for thee.

Thou inexhaustible treasure of mercy, and goodness. Thou, O God! who out of the riches of thy bounty, dost liberally give to all who ask of thee, give me thy grace, that I may ardently love thee, faithfully serve thee, and eternally enjoy thee. Give me thy grace, that I may assist my neighbor with cheerfulness, and benevolence, and when under affliction, console him with tenderness, and fraternal affection, that having been merciful to my neighbor, I may hope to obtain mercy from thee, my God! who hast declared, that what we do to the least of thy brethren is done unto thee: that a cup of cold water given in thy name will have its reward.

The measure of thy generosity, O Lord! is as immense, as thy riches are inexhaustible: do thou, enable me, punctually to fulfil the commandment that thou hast given us in the gospel of this day: that we may be merciful, as our Father is merciful that we may, judge not, lest we shall be judged.

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* xiv. 16, 24.

At that time: Jesus spoke this parable to the Pharisees: A certain man made a great supper, and invited many, and he sent his servant at the hour of supper to say to them that were invited, that they should come, for now all things are ready. And they began all at once to make excuse. The first said to him: I have bought a farm, and must needs go out and see it: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to try them: I pray thee, hold me excused. And another said: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. And the servant returning told the things to his lord. Then the master of thee house being angry, said to his servant: Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the feeble, and the

blind, and the lame. And the servant said: Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said to the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges; and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. But I say unto you, that none of those men that were invited, shall taste of my supper.

INSTRUCTION.

Under the representation of a great supper, the gospel of this day exhibits the infinite goodness of the Almighty, who solicits every individual to participate in the happiness of the kingdom of heaven. He has deputed his servants, the lawful ministers of his gospel, not only to invite, but to announce: that now, all things are ready. His ambassadors finding us unwilling, God, repeats again and again his exhortations, and conjures us, to partake of the felicity he has so mercifully provided. Oh! what goodness, what condescension on the part of God. Who, my soul, is he that invites us? It is God: the supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth: infinitely happy in himself. But who are we, that we are thus highly honored! Dust and ashes. And shall we presume to be unmindful of his repeated solicitations? Oh base ingratitude! Oh dreadful infatuation! thus to expose ourselves to endless misery: thus to refuse the gracious invitation of our God.

If an earthly prince had requested us to partake of an entertainment expressly prepared for our reception, we would not refuse him. Nay, perhaps, we would consider it an honor to be thus distinguished: to be admitted into the palace of a man of his exalted dignity. If so, how can we refuse the infinitely greater honor proposed for our acceptance by the Almighty King of kings? who, by inviting us to his supper, offers for our acceptance, the happiness of the kingdom of Heaven.

Do we understand to what we are invited? Not to an entertainment that is to terminate in a few hours: but to a banquet prepared in heaven, which is to be eternal. A banquet at which will be distributed the bread of Angels, who together with the souls of the just made perfect, will celebrate forever the praises of their God. Then will be fulfilled that, which none of the princes of the world knew, that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him. Oh, Heavens! is it possible, we can refuse to participate in these divine favors? But, alas! are there not too many Christians who imitate the thoughtless and ungrateful men described in the gospel of this day: who not only reject the invitation but bring forward excuses which demonstrate their folly and

ingratitude. One said, he had bought a farm, and he must go and see it: another, that he had purchased oxen, and he must try them. Imprudent men! they preferred the trifling, the temporal advantages of this world, to the truly valuable, and never-ending happiness of the next. They regarded more, the perishable wealth of this life, than the possession of those riches in that kingdom where neither rust nor moth do consume, nor thieves dig through and steal. They were obstinately deaf to the voice of their Redeemer, communicated through his pastors, to lay up treasures for themselves in the kingdom of heaven. Alas! unhappy worldings, are pleased to barter the inexhaustible riches of heaven, for perishable mammon, or the gratification of their corrupt inclinations; unmindful of the important question put by Jesus Christ himself to all his disciples, What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul! or what exchange shall a man give for his soul?

Among others invited to the supper was one, who said that he had married a wife, and rudely answers he could not go. How small the number of those, who embrace the chaste delights of heaven: who altogether devote themselves to the service of God. How numerous the votaries of sensual pleasure: who rather than forego the

gratification of their unlawful desires, relinquish all pretensions to future happiness. Oh, Christians! can the honors, or pleasures of the universe, offer a sufficient recompense for the forfeiture of the eternal presence of God: for the loss of the happiness of heaven: or for the misery of being the everlasting companions of the inhabitants of hell?

Oh! that men were wise, that they would weigh these things in the balance of the sanctuary. Then, would we not only accept with joy the gracious invitation, but studiously avoid every occasion which might endanger our attaining to a seat in the kingdom of God.

The apology offered by the men in the gospel, excited the indignation of their prince; insomuch, that he declared, that none of them should taste of his supper. God, who is infinitely good and gracious, who has prepared for us an eternity of happiness; who has repeatedly called upon us to partake thereof; who expects our coming, with an incomparable patience: and who has sent his messengers to announce to us that, now all things are ready, will punish our ingratitude, with a severity proportioned to the offense committed against his tender invitation. In the exercise of his justice, we shall feel the rigor of his chastisements: he will exclude us from the celestial banquet to which we are now

invited; and receive those, who are more worthy of his regard: he will forsake us; and then we may lament over our folly, in having obstinately rejected his merciful solicitation. We may permit the devil, the world, and the flesh, to assume an entire dominion over our unhappy souls, but the time will arrive, when we will experience the dismal consequences attached to sin: when abandoned by the Almighty, and become a prey to remorse, and unavailing sorrow, we may forever weep over our irremediable ruin. To avoid such a dreadful calamity, let us attend to the voice of the ambassador of nations, who declares that now therefore, is the acceptable time. Now we must endeavor by good works, to make our calling and election sure: that we may avoid the terrible denunciation pronounced against all sinners by the Prince of Heaven and Earth, Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.

PRAYER.

O, thy unspeakable goodness O God! thus to invite poor sinners to thy heavenly banquet: there to participate in the enjoyment of eternal bliss. Truly, O my soul! may we exclaim with the Royal Prophet, Lord, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou dost regard him. By the pastors of thy Church thou dost invite, solicit, and conjure us to ap-

proach to thee; accompanied with the assurance that if we yield obedience, our recompense will be most magnificent: such as shall not have entered into the heart of man to conceive. But, if we refuse submission to thy injunctions, our condemnation will be the effect of our folly, our punishment will be commensurate with the enormity of our ingratitude.

Adorable Savior! I ardently desire to partake of thy heavenly banquet, there to satisfy all the desires of my heart. Remove, I beseech thee! every impediment that may obstruct my becoming inseparably united to thee. For thee, I renounce the world. Farewell honors, riches, and all sordid pleasures: no longer shall you engage my affections, henceforward they are placed upon more noble objects: upon God himself, and the inestimable delights that flow from his Divine Majesty. Oh, how happy is the soul who loves thee, O God! happy here, in an humble confidence in thy mercy: infinitely more happy hereafter, in full enjoyment of thee, O Lord, forever!

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* XV. 1–10.

At that time: The publicans and sinners drew near unto him to hear him. And the Pharisees

and scribes murmured, saying: This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them. And he spoke to them this parable, saying: What man of you that hath a hundred sheep; and if he shall lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety-nine in the desert, and go after that which was lost until he find it? And when he hath found it, lay it upon his shoulders rejoicing; and coming home, call together his friends and neighbors, saying to them: Rejoice with me, because I have found my sheep that was lost? I say to you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven upon one sinner that doth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just who need not penance. Or, what woman, having ten groats, if she lose one groat, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently until she finds it? And when she hath found it, call together her friends and neighbors, saying: Rejoice with me, because I have found the groat which I had lost? So I say to you, there shall be joy before the angels of God upon one sinner doing penance.

INSTRUCTION.

In the gospel of this day, the infinite love and mercy of God manifest themselves in language consolatory, and instructive. Our Divine Redeemer, compares himself to a man, who having lost one of an hundred sheep, left the ninety-

nine in the desert, to seek that which had been lost; and having recovered it, he takes it upon his shoulders, carries it back to the flock, and invites his neighbors to rejoice with him.

When a sinner wanders from the paths of virtue, and precipitates himself into the gulf of vice, God seeks him, and endeavors to bring him back to his paternal bosom: he calls him by his grace: he solicits him by the interior admonition of his conscience: and, by the voices of his ministers, the true pastors of the Church of God. They are commanded, to exhibit to his view, the dangers with which he is surrounded, the alarming consequences which result from a perseverance in his guilty career: they will represent the goodness and bounty of God, who will receive him with kindness, and nourish his soul in the pastures of eternal life.

It is thus the benevolent Jesus manifests his love for his sheep; thus, he not only gives peace on earth to men of good will; but also joy to the inhabitants of heaven: for, the angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner!

Should not the consideration of the love of God for us, fill every heart, with gratitude: quicken every wandering soul with a sincere desire to return, and be converted to the Lord our God? Those, who obstinately persevere in refusing the proffered mercy, may indeed tremble:

to them, the Prophet addresses himself: thy perdition is of thyself, O, Israel!

Let us reflect on what we are deprived of by sin. Sin, robs us of the grace of God: a jewel so precious, that as none but God can give it, so none but God, can appreciate its value. Grace, is the source or all blessings: by grace, we are the beloved children of God. Grace, gives us a title to the kingdom of heaven: by grace we participate in the prayers, and sacraments of the Church: by grace, we partake of the merits of the Saints: by grace, we become heirs of God, and coheirs with Christ!

Oh, Christian! behold the inestimable blessings which you forfeit by sin. By sin, we are the enemies of God. By sin, we are deprived of the best of Fathers. By sin, God becomes an inexorable judge to condemn and punish sinners. By sin, we are the willing slaves of the devil. By sin, we expel the Holy Ghost, who has declared, that he will not dwell in a soul defiled with sin. By sin, we are deprived of the society of angels. By sin, we become the companions of devils, and must expect to share in their eternal torments!

If these are the deplorable effects produced by sin, how immense is the mercy of our God! who, desires not the death of a sinner, but rather that he be converted, and live: who seeks after those who have lost their baptismal innocence, and

most earnestly desires they may purify themselves in the salutary waters of penance, that he may restore them to peace, and perpetual happiness. Let us contemplate the soul restored by perfect penance to the friendship of God. By penance, the sheep that was lost has been found. By penance, the Church upon earth gives glory to God. By penance, the Church in heaven rejoices. By penance, there shall be joy in heaven upon the sinner that doeth penance, more than upon ninety-nine just, who need not penance. By penance, the soul that had the misfortune to fall into mortal sin, has been delivered from perpetual slavery: from cruel chains: from a loathsome prison: from the servitude of the devil: from the bonds of sin: and from the dungeon of hell, which has been prepared for obdurate sinners.

O penitent soul, rejoice! Inexpressible is thy joy, and consolation: magnify the goodness, and mercy of thy God: who has liberated thee, from the captivity of sin: who has rescued thee, from eternal death.

May I regard it as a sacred duty, faithfully to adhere to the Good Shepherd, who has mercifully sought after me when I was lost. Oh! may I not live to be so ungrateful to my God, so unjust to my own soul, as to abandon the path of virtue!

These are the instructions to be derived from the gospel of this day: by repentance, we may return to God; and by his mercy, we may be ever his faithful children, his sheep, who hear his voice, and follow him.

PRAYER.

O Jesus, the true Shepherd of our souls! How can I appear in thy presence conscious of my repeated wandering, having wandered like a sheep that was lost? Ah! my God, why did I leave thy delightful pastures! why did I separate myself from the company of the just, thy faithful sheep. Alas! why did I lose myself in the labyrinth of sin! Dear Lord! I now desire to return to thee, with a heart penetrated with the deepest sorrow for having abandoned thee.

Thou hast been graciously pleased to restore me to thy fold. O my Savior! I adore thy infinite love, and goodness: henceforward, I will endeavor to meditate upon thy mercy, to praise and adore thy unspeakable bounty to me a sinner. I implore thee to grant me thy grace, to do that which thou commandest, and command what thou pleasest; to suffer what thou permittest; and permit what thou pleasest.

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* v. 1, 11.

At that time: It came to pass, that when the multitude pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Genesareth. And he saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them and were washing their nets. And going up into one of the ships that was Simon's, he desired him to draw back a little from the land. And sitting, he taught the multitudes out of the ship. Now when he had ceased to speak, he said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon, answering, said to him: Master, we have labored all the night, and have taken nothing: but at thy word I will let down the net. And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes and their net broke. And they beckoned to their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came and filled both the ships, so that they were almost sinking. Which when Simon Peter saw, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying: Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was wholly astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had

taken. And so were also James and John the sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. And Jesus saith to Simon: Fear not: from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And having brought their ships to land, leaving all things they followed him.

INSTRUCTION.

From the gospel of this day we receive one of the most important lessons conveyed to us through the sacred writings. Master, we have labored all night, and have taken nothing. Here is exhibited to our view, the vanity; the nothingness of this world. Nothing herein can give happines to man: riches, honors, and pleasures, are ever accompanied with anxiety, if not with remorse; avarice, ambition, and sensuality, are the concomitants of all earthly pursuits.

The world may be compared to a violently agitated sea, whereon sinners labor incessantly during the dark, and tempestuous career of life: when the morning of eternity dawns upon them, what are the fruits of their labors? their anxieties? alas! they will exclaim, We have labored all night, and have taken nothing! Treacherous, deceitful world, too late have I known thee! how many false prophets are there to delude us? how many like Judas, to betray? wretched world! thy griefs are genuine: thy pleasures are counterfeit.

But, why have so many Christians labored in vain? because, they have not fervently, and perseveringly, worked out their salvation with fear, and trembling, because, they occupied themselves in seeking after the empty shadows; the fleeting pleasures of this transitory world; and neglected the great affair of their salvation.

If we examine the nature of worldly happiness, riches will first claim our attention. These intrinsically are not evil. They may be, they ought to be made instrumental in procuring our eternal happiness: an immoderate desire to obtain them, by means irreconcilable to the maxims of the gospel is sinful. To possess riches without appropriating that portion which belongs to God, in the manner prescribed by the gospel, but devoting all to Cæsar, or the world, is, not to make them conducive to our everlasting felicity, but rather to endanger the salvation of our immortal souls.

Pleasures are deceitful snares laid by our enemies the devil, the world, and the flesh. Behold, the true exposition of all earthly enjoyments, as defined by the wisest among the children of men, all the kings of the earth sought the presence of Solomon, to hear the wisdom, that God had put into his heart.

I said I will go, and abound in delights, and this was vanity.

I denied myself no pleasure that my heart could desire, and yet, all was vanity, and affliction of spirit.

I saw all the things that are under the sun, and behold, they are vanity, and affliction of spirit.

Truly may it be said, the world is vanity. How can happiness be found amid the pleasures of the world? When in the possession of wealth, have we not experienced the insatiable cravings of avarice, and an unwearied solicitude for its increase? When under the influence of ambition, what disappointments, and mortifications, have we not endured to obtain a fleeting honor! When in the pursuit of pleasure, has not every faculty of mind and body been exerted, to possess a temporary gratification which was perhaps to be succeeded by everlasting death! Oh truly! has the eminent author of the Imitation of Christ declared, that all is vanity but to love God, and serve him. At the command of Jesus, St. Peter cast his net into the sea, and it enclosed a very great multitude of fishes.

Happy! thrice happy those, who hear the word of God, and keep it! who obey the voice of God: who renounce the servitude of Mammon, for the glorious freedom of the children of God: who imitate the brilliant example of the apostles: who, leaving all things, followed him.

We have the undoubted authority of Christ himself, that every one that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold, and shall possess life everlasting. By a hundred-fold, we are consoled with the assurance given us by truth itself, that even here, we shall enjoy an interior tranquillity arising from the testimony of a good conscience, which the world can neither give, nor take away. By the Almighty, we are graciously promised a participation in the unspeakable joys of the kingdom of heaven. Oh! can we hesitate to prepare for this supreme happiness? Should we not determine to co-operate with our merciful Redeemer: renounce the vanities of the world, the suggestions of our enemies, and the allurements of pleasure? Thus, we may secure peace for our souls in this life, and eternal felicity in the next.

PRAYER.

O, Jesus, my adorable Master! how can I delay, when thou callest me? can I disregard thy merciful invitation, when I am convinced that by following, and serving thee, I shall possess eternal happiness? O, Eternal source of all good! how much I owe thee, for thy gracious condescension in soliciting one so totally unworthy, to

partake of thy immeasurable generosity. May thy grace penetrate my inmost soul; that I may reciprocate thy paternal tenderness.

As nothing in this world deserves my affections, do thou, O true life of my soul! occupy my heart. Sincerely, I desire to die to this world: to live only to love, and serve thee. Enable me, O God! to love thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my strength. Oh! that I could love thee, as thou deservest to be loved. Oh! when shall I be so happy as to see thee, love thee, and enjoy thee forever: thou alone, O divine Redeemer! canst satisfy the desires of my soul, for alas! in every other pursuit, I find, I have taken nothing.

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* v. 20–24.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Unless your justice abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old: Thou shalt not kill. And whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment. And whosoever shall say to

his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council. And whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath any thing against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother: and then come and offer thy gift.

INSTRUCTION.

Our Divine Master informs us, that unless our justice or righteousness, exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. The scribes, were the Doctors, and expounders of the Jewish law. The Pharisees, were those who rigidly observed the law in its minutest details. They fasted, gave alms, and made long prayers: they had the appearance of piety, and morality. Yet our Redeemer has declared that unless our righteousness exceed theirs, we shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.

If truth itself, has thus spoken, shall we presume to expect, that a superficial observance of our duty, will secure our salvation? Let us consider the righteousness of the Pharisees: and see wherein it was defective, and why it was condemned.

The righteousness of the scribes and Phari-

sees, was extremely deficient. They affected an austere observance of the external rites of the Jewish law: they washed their hands before they took their meals: they gave the tithes of mint, annis, and cummin: they fasted often, and offered protracted prayers. Nevertheless, they omitted the indispensable obligations of justice, and judgment: mercy, and charity, their hypocrisy, pride and ambition were obvious. To gain the reverential regard of men: to despise all others as less holy than themselves: to pervert the law, of which they were the interpreters, and thus conceal their hatred of their enemies, were the motives and object of their actions.

In that beautiful epitome of Christian duty which our Redeemer delivered on the mountain, we read: You have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you. To hate our enemies was a wicked inference, which the scribes, and pharisees, drew from the sacred text. Our Divine Master, commands us to love our enemies, if we desire to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The justice of the scribes, and Pharisees, however brilliant before men, being unaccompanied with that purity of intention, which could make it acceptable to the Almighty, and condu-

cive to his glory, was rejected. Let their condemnation be a volume of instruction for us: we have received a more holy, a more perfect law: we are required to observe it faithfully: our non-compliance will involve us in the guilt, and consequently expose us to the dreadful punishment pronounced against the Pharisees and with them be excluded from the kingdom of heaven.

How far our righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, is a subject that demands our serious consideration. They sought not the glory of God, but the applause of men: hence, we discover wherein we are to excel them by directing all our actions, and exercises of piety to the honor of God.

When we give alms, they are not to be bestowed through a spirit of pride, or ambitious display, they must be given in secret: The gospel says, our left hand is not to know what our right hand does: thereby intimating, that we should desire our gifts to be known to God alone. Alms thus given will be acceptable to the Most High: they will preserve us from that most dangerous of temptations, pride. Our Redeemer has commanded us, to let our light shine before men, that seeing our good works they may glorify our Father who is in heaven. St. Gregory explains that passage thus: Our good works are to be so done in public, that our neighbor may be edified,

and our intention being to promote the glory of God, he may be graciously pleased to regard them as if performed in private.

When we pray we are not to imitate the Pharisees, who prayed at the corners of the streets: but we should pray in retirement, where God alone, beholds us.

The Redeemer does not here speak of those days dedicated to the worship of God: but by the gospel we are commanded to avoid all ostentation at the public service of the Church; we are exhorted to visit the temples of the Almighty, yield him our homage, and our love, and edify our neighbor.

The Pharisees fasted often: our Savior does not condemn them for fasting, but for their dissimulation: for desiring to be considered as personages of more than ordinary self-denial, whilst their hearts were filled with pride!

Fasting is a Christian duty: to be observed in a penitential spirit: to obtain the pardon of our sins: to mortify the flesh: to subdue our irregular passions, and inordinate desires.

But the justice of Christians, ought to far exceed that of the Pharisees. The peculiar excellence, and sublime perfection of the Christian religion, appears in the short, but comprehensive precept, to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves. By this law we are commanded

to love all mankind, our friends, our enemies, and do good to those who hate us, and thus become perfect as our heavenly Father is perfect.

God, is our common Father: he is our Creator. Our neighbor is our brother: if he has offended us, we must forgive him: if we have injured him, we must make amends, and become reconciled to him. The precept is so obligatory, that our Savior desires us to leave our gifts at the altar, and be reconciled to our brother. when prevented by absence, or any other lawful impediment, we must forgive those who have injured, or offended us, if we expect to obtain forgiveness from God. Thus in our daily prayer we beseech him, to forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. By this all men shall know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another. Thus, let us prove that our justice does exceed that of the Pharisees that we may hope to enter the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

O, Divine Savior, who camest not to destroy, but to fulfil the law! Thou hast vouchsafed to instruct us, that we may observe thy commandments more perfectly, than the scribes and Pharisees did the law of Moses. Give me thy grace, that I may be enabled to fulfil my duty, and each

day advance in virtue. O, thou, Author of all good! enrich my soul with every perfection that can make me acceptable to thee.

Thou camest, Dear Redeemer, to cast the holy fire upon earth: may it inflame my heart, and consume every affection that is not centred in thee! that I may serve thee, with augmented, and constant fervor.

O Jesus, my God! I desire to love thee above all things. Enable me to love my neighbor as myself. For the love of thee, I sincerely forgive those who may have injured, or offended me. I beseech thee, assist me to make satisfaction wherever it may be due. Oh, merciful God! grant me thy grace to live in peace, and die in charity with all mankind.

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Mark* viii. 1–9.

At that time: When there was a great multitude with Jesus, and had nothing to eat: calling his disciples together, he saith to them: I have compassion on the multitude, for behold they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: and if I should send them away fasting to their own home they will faint in the way: for some of them came afar off. And his

disciples answered him: From whence can any one fill them here with bread in the wilderness? And he asked them: How many loaves have ye? Who said: Seven. And taking the seven loaves, giving thanks he broke, and gave to his disciples for to set before them, and they set them before the people. And they had a few little fishes; and he blessed them, and commanded them to be set before them. And they did eat and were filled, and they took up that which was left of the fragments, seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

INSTRUCTION.

The miracle which is the subject of this day's gospel, is one of those stupendous exhibitions of Almighty power which is replete with instruction, and admirably adapted to strengthen, and console us, in our mortal pilgrimage.

If we regard with admiration, the compassion of Jesus, for the multitude, who had followed him: if we contemplate with astonishment, four thousand persons fed with seven loaves, and a few little fishes: if we behold, seven baskets filled with the fragments: how wonderful his mercy! how illimitable his power!

I have compassion on the multitude, said the holy Jesus. What goodness in this tender ex-

expression! The pious multitude had attended to hear his sermon for three days, and had nothing to eat. He would not send them away fasting, lest they should faint in the way! I have compassion on the multitude. Let us learn, and also practise a duty, which we are bound to obey. If Jesus Christ, has thus expressed his tender concern for the multitude, he exhorts us to have compassion for each other! it is an obligation inseparable from our Christian character: behold, says Christ, I have given you an example.

Compassion consists in a delicate regard for the afflictions of another: it is a noble sympathy we have for whatever may affect our neighbor: it instructs us to rejoice with him in prosperity, to mourn with him in adversity: it prohibits our saying or doing anything that may disturb his peace: it regulates not only our actions, but our thoughts and words in his regard: and it makes us prompt to assist him in all his necessities.

But, if compassion thus regards our neighbor, in reference to the mutual connection we have with each other, it more particularly displays itself towards the children of affliction. The misfortunes of this life are so various, that we can never want for objects of commiseration: and not to be affected thereby, must prove us as impervious to the dictates of humanity as unmindful of the precepts of our holy religion.

To be truly compassionate is to assist those who require our aid, and to imitate the example of our Blessed Savior: to prevent in some measure the necessities of others, by a seasonable assistance. Our Redeemer did not delay until he heard the people cry out for food. He knew their wants; therefore, said he to his disciples, I have pity on the multitude!

The tender Christian on beholding a fellow creature in distress, immediately considers how he can alleviate his sorrows: how administer to his wants. His concern is heightened by the just, but powerful reflection, that he might have been placed in a like situation: that he has not, is to be attributed to the goodness and mercy of God. If the corporal necessities of mankind thus elicit our commiseration, how much more should the weaknesses, and natural infirmities of our minds, be objects for the exercise of this Christian virtue. Hence, if we meet with those who are weak, peevish, and passionate: who do not possess prudence, or judgment, we are not to despise them. No! these persons demand our pity, which is to be shown in the mildness of our conduct, and in being always ready to assist, and advise them.

Those who unhappily are viciously disposed, are objects of real sympathy: for this reason, our compassion should be displayed towards

them; for notwithstanding they are sinners, they cease not to be our neighbors: they are our brethren in Jesus Christ. Not to pity, and pray for those who live in a state of sin, is to be wanting in that compassionate disposition so essential to the character of a good Christian. The obligation to discharge this duty has been eloquently illustrated in the parable of the good Samaritan; and the Redeemer has pronounced judgment without mercy, upon those who have not shown mercy. The discharge of this sublime command is imperative upon all: the high, and the low: the rich, and the poor. Let us, by a tender compassion for others, hope to obtain mercy from God for ourselves.

PRAYER.

Compassionate Redeemer of mankind! Thou beholdest our necessities, and thou desirest to relieve them. The multitude had waited upon thee three days, and had nothing to eat: but thou wouldst not send them away fasting: by a miracle thou didst relieve their wants, and reward them for their devotion to thee.

Have pity on me, dear Lord! Nourish my soul with thy grace: that I may practise every virtue, that I may increase in the love of thee, my God: and that I may have a perfect compassion for my neighbor.

SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* vii. 15, 21.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall know them. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits you shall know them. Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of my Father who is is heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.

INSTRUCTION.

In the gospel for this day, Jesus Christ, the Shepherd of our souls, exhorts his disciples to beware of false prophets. Like the Pharisees of old, false teachers by a specious appearance,

may assume a semblance of sanctity, may mislead simple, and unguarded souls, but their real intentions become obvious, when they endeavor to withdraw the flock of Christ, from his fold, the Holy Catholic Church. All external exhibition of sanctity, rigorous austerity, and artificial zeal, if unaccompanied with sound doctrine, and implicit obedience to the spouse of Christ, must be totally disregarded. Those who resist the authority of the Church, how plausible soever their exterior may be, inwardly they are ravening wolves.

By their fruits you shall know them, is the rule given by our Divine Master; those who cause schisms, who refuse to submit to the lawful authority, who display a spirit of contention and disobedience; these are false prophets: these are to be avoided.

Those holy men who have been called by the Almighty to promulgate his doctrine: to proclaim peace on earth to men of good will: these respect the authority of the Church which is the Pillar and the Ground of truth: Whatever the Church approves, they inculcate: whatever the Church condemns, they reject. These are the prophets in whom we may believe: these are they who are solicitous to preserve the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire. Our Redeemer admonishes us, not to omit the practical part of our duty. We are required, to bring forth good fruit, in a holy life, and blameless conversation: to reduce to practice the pure, and holy maxims of the gospel in which we believe. Always to rejoice: to pray without ceasing: in all things to give thanks: not to extinguish the Spirit: not to despise the prophecies: but to prove all things: to hold fast to that which is good: and refrain from all appearance of evil. But if our lives are wicked, if we obstinately transgress the commandments of God, if we disregard the injunctions of the Church, what will be our punishment? Hear the judgment of omnipotent truth. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be cut down, and shall be cast into the fire! Oh, my soul! let us no longer deceive ourselves: let us renounce those false prophets, who have hitherto seduced us from our Father's house; let us return, and prostrate at his feet, promise him eternal fidelity: no longer shall the devil, the world, or the flesh triumph over our ruin. Let us press towards the mark, to the prize of the vocation of God in Christ Je-

sus. Let us therefore, as many as are perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing you be otherwise minded, this also God will reveal to you. Nevertheless whereunto we are come, that we be of the same mind, let us also continue in the same rule.

From what our Redeemer has asserted, it is evident, that not every one who says Lord, Lord, will be saved. They only who bring forth good fruit, can expect to enter the kingdom of heaven: hence the outward profession of the Catholic faith, alone will not save us, for we are assured that Faith without good works is dead. Sinners, Heretics, and Schismatics, may exclaim Lord! Lord! but in vain: these may honor God with their lips, but their hearts are far from him. Our hopes of eternal life are grounded upon our obedience to the law of God. That we live soberly and justly, and godly, in this world. Soberly, by subduing our inordinate, and irregular passions. Justly, by observing the strictest justice in all our dealings. Godly, by a religious discharge of all our duties according to the commands of God, and of his Church: and, that we contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. This is to do the will of God: by this, we may hope to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

O my God! Thou hast been graciously pleased to call me to the knowledge of the true faith. Complete that which thou hast commenced: grant that I may live and die thy faithful servant. As my faith is perfect, do not permit me to be deluded by a dangerous presumption, but assist me to strive by good works, to make my calling and election sure.

O, Jesus, my Sovereign Lord! may I ever love thee for thy goodness, and fear thee for thy judgments, that I may experience the felicity of thy mercy. O, Supreme Light! which illuminates the world, dissipate all darkness in my soul, and become my inheritance for ever. Pierce, O Lord! my flesh with hopeful fear.

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* xvi. 1, 9.

At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: There was a certain rich man who had a steward: and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said to him: How is it that I hear this

of thee? give an account of thy stewardship: for now thou canst be steward no longer. And the steward said within himself: What shall I do, because my lord taketh away from me the stewardship? To dig I am not able; to beg I am ashamed. I know what I will do, that when I shall be removed from the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. Therefore, calling together every one of his Lord's debtors he said to the first: How much dost thou owe my lord? But he said: An hundred barrels of oil. And he said to him: Take thy bill and sit down quickly, and write fifty? Then he said to another: And how much dost thou owe? Who said: An hundred quarters of wheat. He said to him take thy bill, and write eighty. And the lord commended the unjust steward, forasmuch as he had done wisely: for the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light. And I say to you: Make unto you friends of the mammon of iniquity, that when you shall fail, they may receive you into everlasting dwellings.

INSTRUCTION.

God has committed his goods to our care. We are his stewards: at a future day we shall be called upon to give an account of our stewardship. Alas! how great the number who have wasted their goods! who have dissipated the treas-

ures of nature, of fortune, and of divine grace. Let us consider these gifts. The talents which we have received from God to promote his glory, and communicate happiness to others. The temporal blessings we possess health, strength, and riches, to enable us to assist our neighbor, and relieve the poor. The felicity of being Christians, of belonging to the mystical body of Christ, the Holy Catholic Church : the inspiration of the Holy Ghost : the inestimable advantages we possess in the holy sacraments : and the facilities we enjoy of serving the Almighty.

These are the goods which God has consigned to our care. How have we disposed of them? Does our conscience accuse us of perverting our talents, our natural and acquired knowledge, to deride the august service of the Church ; to ridicule her established ceremonies ; to propagate, and defend schisms, and heresies: to despise those who may not have had the advantages of a liberal education : to impose upon the simple, and the weak, and to corrupt their morals.

To destroy our health by criminal excesses : to consume our riches, in luxury, and extravagance : to refuse to succor our neighbor, and supply the wants of the poor : to neglect the important affair of our salvation : to be indifferent in the service of God : to despise his holy inspirations : to neglect the exercises of religion, prayer, hear-

ing the word of God, and to refuse the gracious invitation of our loving Redeemer, who solicits us to approach him in the adorable sacrament of the altar; is truly, to dissipate, to waste, the goods which the Lord has given us.

Give an account of thy stewardship; for now thou canst be steward no longer, said the Lord in the gospel. To each of us will the Almighty address the same language: when death arrives we can be no longer stewards: we shall then be required to give an exact account of all our thoughts, words and actions. Astounding, awful, terrible requisition, for those who have been unfaithful stewards, who have wasted their master's goods! Alas! what account can they present, of that precious time which was given them to work out their salvation, but which they have appropriated to vain, or sinful amusements: to the pursuit of sordid wealth: to the indulgence of unlawful pleasures: to the destruction of their immortal souls!

Let us, like prudent stewards, frequently examine our spiritual accounts: let us, scrutinize our thoughts, words, and actions: let us, endeavor to preserve an equitable balance between our Sovereign Lord as our creditor, and ourselves as his debtor: if hitherto, we have been criminally negligent, let us imitate the policy of the unjust steward. Our Redeemer does

not commend him for the deceit he practised, but for the prudence he manifested: whence he infers, that the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light. Let us imitate those, who are most solicitous when their interests are at stake. To obtain eternal happiness is our deepest concern: let us, therefore make to ourselves friends of the mammon of iniquity: here, riches are designated the mammon of iniquity, not that they are intrinsically evil, but because they are too frequently unjustly acquired: too often misapplied. By prudently disposing of our worldly wealth; by assisting those who require our aid; by supplying the wants of the poor; we may hope through the mercy of God, to be received into everlasting dwellings: and enter into the joy of thy Lord.

PRAYER.

O, thou sovereign Lord of heaven and earth! whose stewards we are; how good, how bountiful hast thou been to me! How manifold the graces and blessings thou has bestowed upon me! All I have is from thee, from whom descends every good and perfect gift. Grant me thy assistance to dispose of thy goods, to thy honor, and glory: to promote the happiness of my neighbor: and secure the salvation of my own soul.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL—*Luke* xix. 41, 47.

At that time: When he drew near, seeing the city, he wept over it, saying: If thou also hadst known, and that in this thy day, the things that are to thy peace: but now they are hidden from thy eyes. For the days shall come upon thee: and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone: because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. And entering into the temple, he began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought. Saying to them: It is written: My house is the house of prayer; but you have made it a den of thieves, and he was teaching daily in the temple.

INSTRUCTION.

Jesus wept over the city! O my soul! behold thy compassionate Redeemer, lamenting even unto tears, the destruction of Jerusalem; the obstinacy of the Jews, and the dispersion of that unhappy people. In this gospel, he represents to

us, the deplorable consequences resulting from sin, the desolation of Jerusalem being figurative of the ruinous effects of violating the law of God.

In the obstinacy of the Jews, we behold the sign of final impenitence, and in their dispersion, the reprobation of the enemies of the Almighty.

There are two circumstances connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, which demand our particular attention. The calamity having been foretold by Christ; and the literal accomplishment of his prophecy. If, we consider Jerusalem at that period, rich and powerful, the capital of that kingdom which God himself had established in the House of David: if we hear the voice of an Evangelist proclaiming, that as Christ drew near to Jerusalem he wept over it: and if we hear from the lips of truth itself that, The days shall come upon thee and thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side, and beat thee flat to the ground, and thy children who are in thee: and they shall not leave in thee a stone upon a stone; because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation, shall we not tremble, at this awful manifestation of the rigor of divine justice! The Romans were the instruments selected by the Almighty, to avenge his insulted majesty. Jerusalem was laid waste. The Temple was con-

sumed by fire. The inhabitants, once the chosen people of God, were carried into slavery!

Thus was the destruction of Jerusalem accomplished: thus was fulfilled the prediction of our Redeemer. Let us consider this awful catastrophe, as a figure of a more terrible calamity which will fall upon sinners. The sufferings of the Jews were temporal, comprising the loss of their city, their possessions and their liberty: whilst that of sinners will be eternal, involving their immortal souls in everlasting misery. The cause of these judicial inflictions upon the Jews, is stated by our Redeemer. Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation. God had chosen them for his own people. He had given them a law by the ministry of angels. He had promised them a Redeemer in the person of his beloved Son, who took upon himself human nature, who was born amongst them after the fulfilment of all the prophecies which had announced the circumstances of his birth; but, they despised Jesus Christ: they rejected his doctrine: they blasphemed his miracles: and they condemned him to the ignominous death of the cross.

Unhappy children of Juda! Because thou hast not known the time of thy visitation, thy enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and straiten thee on every side. Truly, the vengeance of God fell grievously upon them!

They did not know the time of their visitation; because they would not; they atrociously contemned his mercy: they were callous to his entreaties: they fell victims to his inexorable justice!

If the Jews were the peculiar favorites of God, if he granted them many special favors, he has, Christians, given us a more perfect, a more noble law.

To enable us to keep his commandments he grants us his grace, through prayer and the sacraments: his inspirations, whereby he speaks to our hearts: his ministers by whom he exhorts us to repentance: his mercy, in the pardon of our sins.

But, alas! how many are there who, like the perverse Jews, will neither receive his favors, nor regard his merciful invitations! Why, O Lord? Because they have not known the time of their visitation! They obstinately live in the violation of his holy law: they walk in the broad way that leadeth to destruction: they persevere in sinful pursuits until inevitable ruin overtakes them: perhaps, when they least expect it, when too late to lament for their sins; and thus having imitated the Jewish people in their crimes, what can they expect, but to participate in their punishment?

Christians, we have the power to avoid this ter-

rible calamity. The Almighty himself in his Holy Law, directs us to cease to be sinners; to repent of our past crimes; and for the future, to avoid every occasion of sin. Although the malice of sin, may be said to be infinite: although the sinner, and sin, are hateful to God! nevertheless, He is a most tender Father: we are his children. He has loved us from all eternity: he will receive us into his bosom, if animated with sentiments of true contrition, and firm purpose of amendment; he will seal our pardon with the kiss of peace.

The holy Precursor of the Redeemer, exhorts us to fly from the wrath to come: to bring forth worthy fruits of penance. If hitherto we have unhappily lived in sin, let us begin to redeem the time, that has been lost: let us consider every moment given us, as a monument of the mercy of God. Now, this instant, whilst the Almighty spares us, let us endeavor to work out our salvation in fear and trembling: let us avert the impending danger: let us avoid the wrath to come: let us bring forth worthy fruits of penance: let us strive by good works to make our calling and election sure.

PRAYER.

Compassionate Redeemer of mankind! Thou didst weep over unhappy Jerusalem! Thy pre-

cious tears flowed on beholding with omniscient vision the calamities which thy chosen people were to endure! Thou hast the same compassion for all sinners. In thy bitter passion, thou didst shed tears of blood to efface our crimes. Oh! that our hearts could dissolve in tears of compunction for our manifold transgressions against thy Holy Law. Oh! exclaims the Royal Prophet, who will give water to my head, and a fountain of tears to my eyes, that day and night, I may bewail my innumerable offences against my God, who is so patient, so good, and so merciful, who each day solicits our return to our Father's House, who awaits to adorn us with his heavenly graces; to receive us into the mansions of eternal bliss.

Whence is this, that thou, O, my God! should bear with my repeated offences? yet thou art pleased to spare me, and even condescend to admonish me. Oh! loving Redeemer, let not thy goodness prove unproductive. Thy glorious servant, St. Augustine, has declared: that though God had created us without our concurrence, he will not save us without our co-operation. Grant to us thy grace to concur in all thy merciful designs, that we may spare nothing to save our souls: enable us to appropriate this acceptable time to work out our salvation in fear and trembling.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* xviii. 9–14.

At that time: Jesus spake this parable to some who trusted in themselves as just, and despised others. Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee standing, prayed thus with himself: O God, I give thee thanks that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, as also is this publican. I fast twice in the week: I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican standing afar off would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven: but struck his breast, saying: O God, be merciful to me a sinner. I say to you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other, because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.

INSTRUCTION.

In the gospel of this day, Christians are instructed upon one of the most important points of practical virtue. Two men went up to the temple to pray: the one a Pharisee, the other a publican.

The Pharisee inflated with pride appears before God, and thanks him that he is not as the rest of men, nor as this publican. To the vice of inordinate self esteem, he added the public censure of his neighbor; and left the temple with greater sin on his soul.

The publican on the contrary went up impressed with a deep sense of his unworthiness standing afar off he would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven; but struck his breast, saying, O God! be merciful to me a sinner. Having concluded his prayer, this man went down into his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Humility is a virtue inculcated by our Redeemer, to his disciples. It consists, in possessing a modest diffidence of ourselves: a tender regard for our neighbor: and a desire to seek the glory of God, as the supreme source of every good. Hence, the humble Christian acknowledges, that whatever natural, or acquired talents he may possess, they are not of himself, but of God. He admits his spiritual weakness: the corruption of his nature: the violence of his passions: the darkness of his understanding: the depravity of his will: and the frequent failings to which he is exposed. He beholds in himself nothing but weakness, and

misery. The humble disciple of Christ, neither seeks, nor desires the applause of others: he is not excited when commended, nor dejected when refused the approbation he really deserves. Influenced by this happy Christian disposition, he preserves an equanimity of temper in his trials, and exhibits nothing haughty or mean in his conduct through life.

This virtue will incline us to behold with affability, and courtesy, those who are our inferiors: if truly humble, we shall choose rather to triumph by yielding, in matters whose justice and truth do not oblige us to maintain their vindication.

At a period when vice and immorality abound we may perceive too many, alas! whose deportment is such, that with reason we may give God thanks, that we are not like them: nevertheless, we must not imitate the presumptuous Pharisee: we must not attribute this good to ourselves: but, to the grace and mercy of God. If we are not adulterers, extortioners, and unjust, let us exclaim with gratitude in the words of the Royal Psalmist: Not unto us, O Lord! not unto us, but to thy name be all the glory given. Let us acknowledge, that we have nothing of our own: hence, St. Paul says, What hast thou that thou hast not received? and if thou hast received, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received? If we will glory, let it be in the Lord. Humility is

the characteristic of the genuine disciples of Jesus. He says to each of us, Learn of me, for I am meek and humble of heart. Henceforward let us give all the glory to God, to whom alone it is due, and say with St. Paul, If I must glory I will glory in my infirmities.

PRAYER.

O, my God! preserve me from pride. Suffer me not to deprive thee of the honor which is due to thee alone. Permit me not to attribute that to myself, which is the gratuitous effect of thy bounty. Of what can I be proud! for, Behold, O Lord! I was conceived in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me! I who am unable to form a good thought without thy assistance, shall I indulge in vanity: and prefer myself before others? O, my God! let me tremble at the thought of giving so great an offence to thee, the author of all good, to whom alone all glory is due.

I have nothing which I have not received from thee, O Lord! To thy goodness I am indebted for all I have: to thee, do I return all these again. Every suggestion of the devil, the arch-enemy of my soul, every inclination to pride, or self love, I now, and forever reject, and detest. Oh, dear Lord! assist me with thy grace, that I may faithfully adhere to my resolution. Oh, thou! who rejectest the proud, and givest thy grace to the

humble, grant me a perfect humility, whereby I may think lowly of myself, and charitably of others. Take, from me, O Lord! the spirit of pride, and give me the treasure of thy humility.

ELEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Mark* vii. 31–37.

At that time: Jesus going out of the coast of Tyre, he came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee through the midst of the coast of Decapolis. And they bring to him one deaf and dumb: and they besought him that he would lay his hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, he put his fingers into his ears, and spitting, he touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right. And he charged them that they should tell no man. But the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal did they publish it. And so much the more did they wonder, saying: He hath done all things well; he hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak.

INSTRUCTION.

He hath done all things well! Thus exclaimed the admiring multitude, on beholding the miracle wrought by our Divine Redeemer on the deaf and dumb man. And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened!

The miserable state of this man excited the commiseration of the tender Jesus. To all who are afflicted, he offers his assistance. for those who are spiritually deaf, and dumb: for those who do not know the things that are for their peace: for those who will not hearken to the pastors whom Christ has delegated to assist them: for these he looks up to heaven, and sighs!

The Royal Psalmist, speaking of the heathen idols says: They have ears, and hear not: mouths, but speak not. In a spiritual sense, the same is applicable to those sinners, who notwithstanding the repeated admonitions of the Church to forsake their evil ways, yet persevere in sin. These the Holy Ghost, declares to be deaf and dumb dogs: for though they appear to be in the full possession of their senses, by a manifest misapplication of their gifts, they render them worse than useless.

The peculiar advantage of hearing, was given us, to hear and understand what is said: but, it is immaterial whether we can or cannot hear, if we disregard that which is addressed to us. To be so deaf as not to hear, is truly a great affliction: but, those who obstinately contemn the voice of truth, are guilty of a voluntary crime, and their offence becomes the more heinous, when the persons by whom they are addressed may with justice command their attention, and reverential regard. He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me. And he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

What has been adduced in relation to those who are spiritually deaf, may with perfect propriety be applied to those, who have lost the faculty of speech. To be dumb is generally considered a natural consequence of being deaf: so when sinners have become spiritually deaf, they become spiritually dumb.

The privilege of speech is given us by the Almighty, that thereby, we may glorify him, promote our own happiness and that of our neighbor. When we deviate from these objects, we may be said to be spiritually dumb. When we consider the manifold, and horrible abuses of the tongue, such as cursing, swearing, blaspheming, calumny, lying, detraction, immodest conversation, etc. it is most evident, that those who thus employ their

tongues, are in a more wretched condition than the dumb man spoken of in the gospel. Another evidence of spiritual incapacity of speech, is the omission of prayer and the practice of devotion, and the neglect of the duties of our holy religion! In this respect how many are spiritually dumb? Though they can speak with eloquence, in relation to the things of the world: of God, of his honor, of his commandments, of the precepts of the Church, they know not how! that is, they will not speak: thus it is, that many, alas! are spiritually deaf and dumb. These must have recourse to Jesus. By sincere sorrow they must seek to obtain the pardon of their sins: their sorrow must be accompanied with unalterable resolutions of amendment: they must apply to the ministers of God, in the sacrament of penance: it is there, that Jesus Christ will put his finger into their ears: it is there he will touch their tongues: it is there, he will utter those omnipotent words, Ephpheta, Be thou opened.

PRAYER.

How miserable, O God! is the condition of those who will not hear thy voice: who will not praise and extol thy power. Thou who didst make the deaf hear, and the dumb speak, show thy goodness to all who labor under spiritual infirmities: open their ears that they may under-

stand: unbind their tongues, that they may glorify thee—and, whilst I supplicate thee, O Lord! in behalf of others, do not forget thy poor servant. Alas! I have been too often deaf to thy gracious invitations: for the future, give me understanding, and instruct me in the way wherein I may walk.

Alas! I have been silent in relation to thee, O, bountiful Author of all things! how ungrateful,—how forgetful have I been! O! unloose my tongue, that I may declare thy praise,—that I may sing the mercies of my God. I glorify thee, O merciful Redeemer! for thy unbounded goodness to me, and all mankind.—Bless the Lord, O my soul,—and all that is within me, praise his holy name. O! Lord, thou hast done all things well: thou hast made the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* x. 23–37.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see. For I say to you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things that you see, and have not seen them; and to hear the things that you hear, and have not heard them.

And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him: and saying: Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering said: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbor as thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do and and thou shalt live. But he willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: and who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering, said: A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, who also stripped him, and having wounded him went away leaving him half dead. And it chanced that a certain priest went down the same way: and seeing him, passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place, and saw him, passed by. But a certain Samaritan being on his journey, came near him; and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And going up to him, bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine: and setting him upon his own beast brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And the next day he took out two pence, and gave to the host, and said: Take care of him; and whatsoever thou shalt spend over and above, I at my return will repay thee. Which of these three in thy opinion was neighbor to him

that fell among the robbers? But he said: He that showed mercy to him. And Jesus said to him: Go, and do thou in like manner.

INSTRUCTION.

Would to God, that Christians would frequently, and seriously ask our Divine Redeemer, Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? The important question proposed by the lawyer, to Jesus Christ, is applicable to every one who desires to attain the kingdom of heaven. What is written in the law? How readest thou? said the Savior of mankind. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, with all thy strength, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. This do, and thou shalt live. In this short summary, is presented to us,—our obligations to God, and to our neighbor: upon these two commandments, depend the whole Law, and the Prophets. Hence, unless we sincerely love God and our neighbor, in vain we may hope to obtain eternal life. To love God, is the first, the greatest commandment. To love our neighbor as ourselves, is the second indispensable obligation prescribed by the gospel for our instruction.

We must prove our love for God, by giving him the first place in our hearts—he alone, is to be loved above every object: all other things are

to be loved in and for him. To love God sincerely, we must renounce all affection to sin: inasmuch as sin is an infinite offence committed against his Divine Majesty, we cannot truly say we love him, whilst we obstinately transgress his law. Obedience to the commandments, is the most certain proof of our love for the supreme Lawgiver. Another incontestable evidence that we love him, is apparent, when we employ ourselves in those things that are agreeable to him. How can those Christians to whom prayer is irksome,—to whom the duties of religion are fatiguing, persuade themselves that they love God. That there are too many of this description, is evident, from the neglect of practising the duty of prayer, and the absence of the necessary disposition, worthily to approach the sacraments.

If to love God with all our hearts, necessarily includes a desire to be with him, so it produces a perfect confidence in him, and an entire resignation to his holy will in the dispensations of his providence. When we are so happy as to have proof of these dispositions, we may truly declare, we love God with all our hearts! But, it shows a weak, an imperfect love, when we are impatient, or repine under the crosses which befall us, and which are inseparable from the nature of man. Whatever happens is by the permission of God, and designed for our greater good. The de-

pravity of our nature is so great, that we are in imminent danger of being seduced by the allurements of the world: hence, God is pleased to send us afflictions, to withdraw our hearts from created objects, and to place them upon him, who is the way, the truth and the life. If we love God sincerely, we will earnestly desire to be dissolved, and be with Christ. The world and its deceitful pleasures will no longer charm us: death, instead of being dreadful, will be desirable: and we will incessantly sigh after that heaven where we can be perfectly happy in the enjoyment of God.

To the love of God must be joined the love of our neighbor, which our Redeemer assures us is the second great commandment. So inseparable is this duty from the law of God, that unless we sincerely love our neighbor, we are hypocrites and painted sepulchres. He that loveth not his brother whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not? To love our neighbor, is a proof that the charity of God dwells in us. We are required to love our neighbor as ourselves. Our self-love is sufficiently evident; we love ourselves not only sincerely, but perhaps, too much. Thus we must love our neighbor: we must assist him as far as in our power: we must not injure him in his person, property or character—and as we hope to obtain forgiveness, so

must we, from our hearts, forgive the injuries done unto us. By this shall men know, that ye are my disciples, if ye have love for one another.

PRAYER.

Inexhaustible Fountain of Divine Charity! fill my heart with a sincere love of thee. I love thee, because thou art infinitely good, and perfect, and most worthy of all my love: for the love of thee, I renounce the suggestions of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and desire to love thee above all things.

Thou has commanded me, O Lord! to love my neighbor as myself. I give thee thanks for this sweet commandment of thy love: in my neighbor, I behold thy image, and likeness: thy bounty and thy goodness. O! give me thy grace, that I may love him as myself.

THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* xvii. 11, 19.

At that time: As Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. And as he entered into a certain town, there met him ten men who were lepers, who

stood afar off; and lifted up their voice, saying: Jesus, master, have mercy on us. Whom, when he saw, said: Go, show yourselves to the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went, they were made clean. And one of them when he saw he was made clean went back, with a loud voice glorifying God. And he fell on his face before his feet, giving thanks: and this was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said: Were not ten made clean, and where are the nine? There is no one found to return and give glory to God, but this stranger. And he said to him: Arise, go thy way; for thy faith hath made thee whole.

INSTRUCTION.

To be grateful for favors received, is agreeable to reason and religion. Ingratitude, though universally condemned, is yet too common amongst men. When we require assistance we solicit aid from those who can relieve us: but, how few are willing to evince their gratitude, or acknowledge the kindness conferred upon them! It were devoutly to be desired that unthankfulness was confined to our intercourse with the world, but unhappily, it is shown even to the Almighty himself.

How nearly do the main body of Christians imitate the nine lepers mentioned in the gospel! are they not extremely deficient in the discharge

of an important duty? namely, a grateful sense of the manifold benefits they have received from God, and a virtuous application of his favors and mercy.

As the kindness, and clemency of God is unlimited, our gratitude, and love should be unbounded. Let us consider the general and particular favors, the Almighty has conferred upon every individual. The general favors may be divided into corporal, and spiritual. Corporal blessings comprise our creation, our preservation, our health, and subsistence. Those of a spiritual character, are, our redemption, our being members of the true Church, our sanctification, the knowledge of our duty, the exercise of prayer, and a participation in the sacraments. Here is demonstrated, in a conspicuous manner, the bounty, the goodness of God! Oh! how much gratitude do we not owe him. If to these general favors, which we have received in common with all Christians, we add those particular blessings, that have been conferred upon us, we easily perceive that there is a special providence, which continually presides over us, to protect us from danger, and conduct us to happiness. When dangerously ill, have we not cried out with the lepers, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us! When in imminent danger: when oppressed with trouble: when cast down by misfortunes: when friends

have been supplicated but without effect: has not the kind hand of God interposed, has he not raised some unexpected agency to pour balm into our afflicted hearts!

These blessings demand our most grateful acknowledgment: to withhold it, would be a proof, that we are not only unworthy, but insensible of the benefits we have received: with the Samaritan leper, let us loudly praise, and give glory to God: let us acknowledge, that it is from his bountiful hand, we have received every grace and blessing; let us give him the full expression of our gratitude: let us prove our sincerity, by a zealous co-operation with the Almighty, in the stupendous mysteries of our creation, redemption, sanctification, and preservation: let us love, and serve him faithfully here, that we may rejoice with him eternally hereafter. Although our health, strength, learning, and abilities, are all derived from God, yet, alas! how many pervert them to the most corrupt purposes? It is true, many when afflicted with disease, call upon God: beseech him to restore them to health, and make many protestations of faithful attachment: but when the Almighty hears their prayers, and grants their petitions, their good purposes vanish: like the dog, they return to their vomit: like the nine ungrateful lepers, they return not, to give glory to God.

Let us tremble, lest we excite the indignation of God, against us, for the ingratitude we have manifested: for the unspeakable mercies we have abused: let us henceforth resolve to serve him with fidelity and perseverance to the end.

PRAYER.

Bless thou the Lord, O, my soul! and all that is within me praise his holy name. It is just, and meet, that I should praise, and glorify thy name, O Lord! for the innumerable favors I have received from thee, O, munificent God! Alas! my soul, how ungrateful have I been to God: how forgetful of my duty! I am covered with confusion, when I consider my ingratitude—pardon me, dear Lord! may I have a perfect consciousness of the obedience and love I owe thee: may every moment of my life be dedicated to thee: may my soul incessantly breathe forth the most affectionate sentiments of love: may my tongue continually proclaim thy goodness: and, may my mind be ever occupied in meditating upon thy mercies. O! that I could praise thee with the wisdom of the Cherubim: the love of the Seraphim: the ardor of the Angels: even with the gratitude of the Samaritan leper,—that I could with a loud voice, glorify God.

FOURTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* vi. 24, 33.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say to you, be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment? Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, nor gather into barns, and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they? And which of you, by taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit? And for raiment why are you solicitous? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe: how much more you, O ye of little faith? Be not solicitous therefore, saying, what shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or

wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things. Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and his justice and all these things shall be added unto you.

INSTRUCTION.

Truth itself has assured us that we cannot serve two masters. Nevertheless, there are persons who think otherwise: who discover no difficulty in what our Redeemer declares to be impossible: who endeavor to assimilate the vicious maxims of the world, with the sublime truths of the gospel. We have been created to love, and serve God: he is a jealous God, and will not permit the homage due to him alone to be divided with another: corrupt nature suggests many artifices to unite with the love of God an attachment to the world. Such an attempt is not only futile, but impious: whoever undertakes it is immediately abandoned by the Almighty; for he occupies no portion of a divided heart. No man can serve two masters. Wherefore, as we are obliged to obey, can we for a moment hesitate to make choice of God for our master, since to serve him ensures perfect freedom, glorious liberty—to live, as rational beings: to fulfil the object of our creation: to serve

God faithfully here, and be happy with him forever hereafter. Thus does the Almighty speak to us by his Prophet, I will show thee, O, Man! what is good, and what the Lord requireth of thee: verily to do judgment, and to love mercy, and to walk carefully with thy God. Behold, an epitome of Christian duty: of all that God requires of us: of our obligations to God, our neighbor, and ourselves: we are to love, honor, and obey God, in and above all things. What more just, than that the creature should esteem, reverence, and submit to the authority of his Creator? let us therefore endeavor to walk carefully with our God.

As we have a mutual dependence upon each other, how conformable to reason, that we should live soberly, justly, and piously: that we should control our passions: that we should cultivate the virtues of humility, patience, resignation, purity, and piety: and studiously avoid the opposite vices. The service we render to God in the practice of these virtues, is evident, and can only be contested by a corrupted judgment; a vitiated will; or a depraved heart: let us endeavor to walk carefully with our God, and love to show mercy one to another; that we may avoid the punishment reserved for the wicked, and possess the happiness prepared for the faithful servants of God, in the kingdom of heaven.

The servitude of the world is a bitter slavery. Nevertheless, to adopt its maxims: to comply with established custom: to yield obedience to the voice of fashion: appears to be the supreme object with many. But, what are the substantial benefits the world offers for our acceptance?

Riches, honors, and pleasures. How much labor and anxiety, and perhaps, how many unjust devices are required, to obtain a portion of the mammon of iniquity, and when acquired, what solicitude to increase and preserve it?

To possess the honors of this world, and gratify our ambition, through how many sycophantic humiliations, and servile adulations, must we pass! When the object is attained, the punctilious ceremonies appended thereto, deprive us of that freedom in which consists the principal happiness of life.

Those in the pursuit of pleasure devote their time, their health, their riches and the talents given them for a more dignified purpose to the gratification of their criminal passions, and too often, alas! to the destruction of others.

Truly, the world governs a great portion of mankind with despotic sway! It commands our time, and labor: it will not permit us to think of God, or the salvation of our souls; lest, we should break our chains, and escape from servitude: it inculcates the principles of hatred,

malice, revenge, and contention, and daily supplies fuel to these unholy fires. Christians! what is there desirable in so inglorious a slavery? can we continue to embrace our chains? to prefer the service of the world, to that of Almighty God, who has declared, that his yoke is easy, his burden light: and, that by following him, we should enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God. Let us, therefore, resolve to cast all our care upon him, that we may be enabled to serve him with all our hearts, with all our minds, and with all our strength: and, before all things, to seek first the kingdom of God, and his justice, that all these things might be added unto us.

PRAYER.

Adieu vain world! no longer you have dominion over me. I forever renounce your slavery. To thee, O God of my heart! I dedicate myself. Thou only, hast a right to my service. I wish to be entirely thine. Thou, who art the truth, hast assured me, that no man can serve two masters.

O God! thou has created me for thyself, and the enjoyment of thee, in the kingdom of heaven. Thou, hast called me to thy holy service, that I might serve thee in perfect freedom. To serve thee, is a greater dignity, than to reign! assist me with thy grace, that I may persevere in

thy service to the last moment of my life: confirm me, O, my God! in this good purpose; enable me to begin to love and serve thee; for all I have hitherto done is nothing.

FIFTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* vii. 11–16.

At that time: Jesus went into a city called Naim: and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude. And when he came nigh to the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her. Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, said to her: Weep not. And he came near and touched the bier. And they that carried it, stood still. And he said: Young man, I say to thee, Arise. And he that was dead, sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother. And there came a fear on them all: and they glorified God, saying: A great prophet is risen up amongst us, and God hath visited his people.

INSTRUCTION.

To read that portion of the sacred writings allotted for this day, must excite our commiseration, and move us to sympathize in the grief of a desolate widow for the death of her only son: but, the objects the Church has in view, in proposing it for our consideration are more extensive. Let us adopt her sentiments: let us examine these important truths: let us endeavor to reduce them to practice, that we may with a holy fear glorify God. And it came to pass afterwards, that he went into a city called Naim, and there went with him his disciples, and a great multitude, and when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and a great multitude of the city was with her, whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with compassion for her; he said to her, Weep not!

The compassionate Jesus addressing the afflicted parent: says, Weep not! dry these tears: your sorrow shall be turned into joy: the gospel adds, And he gave him to his mother! The multitude that witnessed this miracle of omnipotence, and of mercy, in transports of admiration exclaimed, A great prophet is risen among us, and God hath visited his people.

Here, the Church presents for our serious con-

sideration two most important truths, viz. the certainty of death; and the uncertainty of the time when it will visit us. Behold, a young man taken in the bloom of youth, the growing hope of a tender, a widowed mother: her anticipations of future happiness frustrated: behold him a lifeless corpse: in him, let us contemplate ourselves: what he was, we shall also be.

We have daily evidence that it is appointed for all men once to die: it is not in the power of man to alter this decree: it includes all the children of Adam: although libertines, heretics, and infidels, may sneer with insolent ridicule, renounce the faith of their forefathers and despise the sacred commandments of God, and of his Church; yet these, even these must admit this important truth, that it is appointed for all men once to die. The hour will arrive, when we must bid adieu to this world: when our bodies will be laid in the grave and become the food of worms: when our souls will receive the rewards promised to the just; or, the punishments reserved for the wicked.

O, Great God! is it possible that men should neglect to meditate upon death! that they should live, and sin, as if they were never to leave this world: that pride, anger, detraction, impurity, with every other vice, should be the daily practice of their lives. Some men may for some time

possess the passing good things of this life: they may attract the admiration of the thoughtless: but when surprised by the hand of death, they fall into their original nothingness: for dust we are, and into dust we must return! By death, the Almighty will terminate the miseries of the poor. Death knows no distinction between the high and the low: the rich and the poor: the happy or the miserable: all are amenable to its power: all nature must admit the universal law, that it is appointed for all men once to die.

Notwithstanding it is so evident that we must all die, yet the time is uncertain. We know not whether it will be in the winter, or the summer; by day, or by night; in youth, or old age; by fever, or by the sword; whether violent, or natural. The time, and the manner, are equally unknown: we often hear of persons in health being attacked with sudden illness of which they die very suddenly. Others on the approach of illness, send for a physician, who assures the patient that there is no danger; he prescribes remedies, but they do not have the desired effect; the malady increases, the patient dies. May not such death be called sudden? Let us not flatter ourselves that youth, health or strength, will shield us from the dart of death. The widow's son was a young man when taken from his mother: let us therefore watch, for we know not the day, nor the hour.

From these reflections it follows, that we should very carefully prepare for death: yet, alas! how many are altogether indifferent as regards the life to come. How terrible the consequences attending their culpable negligence! those who defer their reconciliation with God, until attacked with perhaps a mortal sickness, what certain expectation have they, that they will participate in the consolations of religion; of that religion, which they have despised, if not insulted: that they, at that awful hour can procure a confessor, to whom they may unburden the heavy load that oppresses their guilty conscience? that they may hear the consoling assurance that their sins are forgiven them; that they may receive here, in the adorable Sacrament, a pledge of their eternal happiness hereafter? Oh! let these unhappy sinners, reflect seriously upon the words of Saint Jerome: Of a hundred thousand men, whose lives have been habitually wicked, scarcely one shall find mercy at his death!

If we desire that our death should be precious in the sight of God; our lives must be an edifying example to others: if we hope to die the death of the just; we must live the life of the righteous: with St. Paul, we must die daily to the world: we must have the image of death constantly before our eyes: we must remember our last end, and we shall never sin.

PRAYER.

O, thou supreme Lord of life, and death! imprint upon my mind the remembrance of my last end. To die, is an universal sentence: nor do I seek to be exempt from it. I submit to thy decrees, O, wise dispenser of all things! I am convinced that if I love, and serve thee faithfully, my death will be a short passage to eternal life.

Merciful God! in whose hands are all the moments of my life: thou hast said I must die! but when, or how, thou hast most wisely concealed, that I may be always prepared for death. I adore thy paternal providence, and desire to submit myself to thy holy will in all things: one favor I most humbly implore of thee, that thou take me not hence, with my sins unpardoned. Dear Lord! make me by thy grace acceptable in thy sight: have compassion on me, say to my soul, arise! that I may glorify thee, O God, forever!

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Luke* xiv. 1–11.

At that time: When Jesus went into the house of one of the chief of the Pharisees on the Sabbath-day to eat bread, they watched him.

And behold there was a certain man before him that had the dropsy. And Jesus answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees saying: Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-day? But they held their peace. But he taking him, healed him, and sent him away. And answering them, he said: Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit; and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath-day? And they could not answer him to these things. And he spoke a parable also to them that were invited, marking how they chose the first seats at the table, saying to them: When thou art invited to a wedding, sit not down in the first place, lest perhaps one more honorable than thou be invited by him; and he that invited thee and him, come and say to thee, Give this man place: and then thou begin, with shame to take the lowest place. But when thou art invited, go, sit down in the lowest place: that when he who invited thee cometh, he may say to thee, Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have glory before them that sit at table with thee: because every one that exalteth himself, shall be humbled; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

INSTRUCTION.

Our Redeemer, was invited by a chief of the Pharisees, to eat bread with him on the Sabbath-

day: those who were present, the gospel adds, watched him: being desirous to notice anything in his conduct whereon they might accuse him before the people. Base, ungenerous stratagem! Sincerity in all our intentions, is as requisite as in every action of our lives: without sincerity, there can be no mutual confidence. The welfare of society requires reciprocal co-operation; therefore it is as unreasonable to expect, as it is impossible to discover it, among those who are not sincere. Specious professions of kindness: plausible offers of service are but too frequently made use of to cover some hidden design, some sinister motive.

Notwithstanding our Divine Master has condemned the conduct of the Pharisees, are there not many Christians, who imitate these whitened sepulchres? are there not many who act with duplicity in their intercourse with their neighbors; are there not many, who contemn the gospel rule which commands us to do unto others as we would they should do unto us?

From this fundamental principle we should never deviate: as we expect that men would be candid in their dealings with us, surely they have a just right to an interchange of the social compact. Our intentions, and our actions, should always correspond. If this was a general rule, deceit, and injustice would be unknown amongst

us: the object for which society was formed would be attained: men would live as Christians. But, alas! to the total neglect of this important dogma may be ascribed, the unhappy dissensions which prevail in society, and which unhappily, too frequently destroy the peace of families. To remove so alarming an evil is a duty we owe society: but as Christians, we are expressly commanded by our Divine Redeemer, to do unto all men, as we would they should do unto us. He has assured us, that in this consists the fulfilment of the Law, and the Prophets.

It is a principle of charity, not to think evil; to suffer all things and to bear all things. From the weakness of our nature, we are all liable to err: therefore we are each of us obliged to bear with the defects of the other; we cannot love God without loving our neighbor: he that says he loves God, and hateth his brother, is a liar. We must give the most charitable construction to the words and actions of others. If through human frailty our brother errs, we should consider how far inadvertence, weakness, or temptation, may have influenced him. Let us imitate our Divine Master, who not only endured the malice of the scribes, and Pharisees, but animated with charity endeavored to correct their judgments, reclaim them from their vicious ways, and remove the prejudice they entertained against

his doctrine and person. Hence, we are instructed to observe a modest condescension towards others, and give a reasonable satisfaction to those who may entertained unfounded prejudices against us. Thus, mutual courtesy will admirably sustain the harmony of social life, and each of us will participate in the happiness it produces.

Although our Divine Redeemer knew the exterior respect which the Pharisees required for the religious observance of the Sabbath, nevertheless, he would heal the man afflicted with the dropsy, on the Sabbath day: yet to avoid giving any cause of scandal, he previously inquired, if it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath day? But, the gospel informs us, they held their peace; not presuming to say, that a good work should not be done on these days. Whilst they were thus perplexed, and discomfited, our Savior healed the afflicted man and meekly inquired, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fall into a pit, and will not immediately draw him out on the Sabbath day?

Saint Paul says, All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient. Although there may be those, who take offence at the innocent recreations we may partake of on the Sabbath, yet, we must always observe a charitable consideration for our neighbor: we must follow the perfect

example of St. Paul: Wherefore, if meat scandalize my brother, I will never eat flesh, lest I should scandalize my brother. Genuine charity is always compassionate: the more unreasonable and unjust some are, the more they demand our commiseration, the more we should endeavor to remove their unfounded prejudices. Sanctified by these motives, our days would pass in peace, and the transient consolations of this life, would be succeeded by permanent happiness in the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

Deliver me, O Jesus! from malice, and envy: deliver me from their direful effects, rash judgments: give me a tender consideration for the weakness, and imperfections of others: enable me to render every good in my power to those who may require it: replenish my soul with thy graces and a perfect purity of intention: remove far from me pride and dissimulation: infuse into my heart meekness, sincerity, patience, charity, and every virtue, by which I may become more acceptable to thee.

Adorable Master! with admirable meekness and condescension, thou didst endeavor to reclaim thy insidious, thy avowed enemies; although thou penetratest the depth of their dissimulation, thou didst accept their invitation, that thus, thou

mightest overcome their inveterate malice, by thy unbounded mercy. Oh! enable me to imitate thee, that I may never rashly judge, much less presume to condemn my neighbor: that I may endeavor to correct my manifold transgressions, and meekly, and charitably, endure the weaknesses and imperfections of others.

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xxii. 35–46.

At that time: The Pharisees came to Jesus: and one of them, a doctor of the law, asked him, tempting him: Master, which is the great commandment of the law? Jesus said to him: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets. And the Pharisees being gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying: What think you of Christ? whose son is he? they say to him: David's. He saith to them: How then doth David in spirit call him Lord,

saying: The Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand until I make thy enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

INSTRUCTION.

Those implacable enemies of Jesus Christ, the scribes and Pharisees, having been confounded by the wisdom of the Redeemer, employed a doctor of their law to make another attempt to ensnare him, that they might have a plausible pretext to proceed against him. In the chapter from whence the gospel of this day is taken we read, that our Blessed Lord was attacked by three classes of enemies, who though at variance amongst themselves, yet, concurred in the iniquitous design of tempting Christ.

The first, were the Herodians, who questioned him relative to paying tribute to Cæsar. The second, were the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection. The third were the Pharisees, who required to know the greatest commandment. To these subtle questions, our Divine Redeemer answered as one possessing infinite intelligence. His adversaries were overwhelmed with confusion. Neither durst any man from that day forth, ask him any more questions.

The undeniable evidence which Jesus Christ gave, that he was the Son of God, the long promised Messiah, the desired of Nations: the irrefragable testimony of stupendous miracles, attested by the voice of his Eternal Father, who proclaimed to the world: This is my beloved Son, hear ye him: all these were insufficient to convince the proud, the obstinate Pharisees: but, if the inflexible wickedness of the Pharisees excites our amazement, what must be our apprehension for those Christians who make profession of their belief in Christ and in his doctrine, who nevertheless, deny him by the sinfulness of their lives.

When we are persuaded of the sacred truths of the Christian religion, we are obliged to observe the rules it prescribes: the appellation of Christian, will but increase the guilt of those who bear the sacred character, if their lives are not conformable to the duties of divine faith.

The Pharisees would not acknowledge Christ as the Messiah; they denied he was the Son of God: consequently, as they rejected himself, they refused to receive his doctrine. In this, they were more consistent than those Christians who confess him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, and yet live in open violation of the laws of the gospel. If we will not be governed by his precepts, why do we profess our belief in the principles he inculcated; why do we submit

to all the speculative truths of the Christian religion, and refuse to observe, or rather virtually deny those that are practical? The precepts of the gospel oblige us to practise humility, meekness, patience, and charity. But alas! how many are proud and arrogant? how many are provoked to anger, how many who entertain sentiments of malice and resentment against their neighbor? Can these be said to possess the virtues required by the gospel, as exemplified by Jesus Christ himself. Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart. In your patience you shall possess your souls. He that says he loves God, and hateth his brother, is a liar.

When we behold in the greater part of mankind an inordinate attachment to the goods of the world, when the important duties of religion, prayer, the sacraments, and the word of God are contemned, may we not apply to the lukewarm Catholics of our day the words St. Augustin addressed to the wicked Christians of his time, Either change your manners or your name.

To be a Christian is certainly a most valuable blessing. To be a good Catholic we must confess Jesus to be the Son of God. To have a firm persuasion of the truths of the gospel, is a happiness which none but a God of infinite goodness and mercy could bestow. Let us faithfully and ardently co-operate with his unbounded love for

us: let the gospel be the rule of our lives. Let us live as Christians: as those who believe in Jesus Christ. Let us ever bear in mind, that our merciful Redeemer will one day be our inexorable Judge, that to him, we must render an account of every thought, word and action: impressed with a conviction of these important truths, let us reduce them to practice: let us no longer live in a speculative belief; but in the practice of every Christian virtue, that at the last, the awful day, we may be found worthy to be numbered among those on the right hand of our Redeemer, that we may hear from him, the consoling words, Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world.

PRAYER.

Adorable Jesus! how obstinate, how ungrateful were the Jews. In the most engaging, and persuasive manner, thou didst invite, thou didst solicit them to believe in thee: thou didst entreat them to partake of the happiness thou has prepared for thy faithful followers, but alas! in vain. They sought to ensnare thee by insidious questions: they contemned thy heavenly doctrine: they scoffed at thy miracles: they conspired against thy person: they crucified thee on an ignominious cross.

Oh! dear Redeemer, do not suffer us to make void the grace of God, by resisting thy gracious invitations: by despising thy merciful admonitions. I confess, that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God: enable me, dear Lord! to love thee, obey, and faithfully persevere in thy service. O! that all mankind might know thee, love thee, and serve thee. O! that we might be so happy as to bring all sinners to thee, by a sincere repentance: give us an ardent zeal for the salvation of souls: bless, O Lord! our feeble endeavors, and if any good result therefrom, not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name be all the glory given.

Adorable master? thou hast said, that it is not every one who says Lord! Lord! that shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of thy heavenly Father. Infuse thy grace into my soul that I may prove to thee, and before the world, that I am truly thy disciple: enable me, to walk in the paths of humility, patience, and charity, wherein for my example and encouragement thou hast walked before me: that I may love thee, O my God! above all things, and my neighbor as myself.

EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* ix. 1–8.

At that time: Jesus entering into a boat, he passed over the water and came into his own city. And behold they brought to him one sick of the palsy, lying in a bed. And Jesus seeing their faith, said to the man sick of the palsy: Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And behold some of the scribes said within themselves: He blasphemeth. And Jesus seeing their thoughts said: Why do you think evil in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee: or to say, Arise and walk. But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then said he to the man sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house. And he arose and went into his house. And the multitudes seeing it, feared, and glorified God that gave such power to men.

INSTRUCTIONS.

And behold they brought to him one sick of the palsy lying on a bed. This poor man was not only afflicted with a corporal malady, but also suffered under a spiritual distemper,

produced by sin. Some charitable individuals laid him a bed, and carried him to Christ; who on beholding him, being moved with compassion, said to him, Son, be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee. It is evident that the Almighty had thus afflicted this man, in his body, to effect the cure of his soul: for had he not been sick of the palsy, probably he had never gone to Jesus: and like many others, had died in his sins. Our Redeemer, who knows the secrets of all hearts, beheld his faith, his humility, and his contrition: he addressed him with these words, so full of consolation. Be of good heart, son, thy sins are forgiven thee. Having thus effected the cure of his soul, by the pardon of his sins, he restored health unto his body by saying unto him, Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. These paternal chastisements are the just punishment due for our manifold sins. Oh! happy afflictions, which bring us to a proper consideration of our duty: which make us sensible of the dire effects of sin: happy sickness! which prostrates us before the omnipotent God; humbly to acknowledge his justice, and to implore his mercy, through faith, humility, and contrition.

When in the sacrament of penance, the Almighty by his ministers forgives us our sins, he bids us arise, and go to our house. We must thenceforth walk in the way which will lead us

to heaven, which alone can be properly termed our permanent abode: for we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come. We must rise and walk in the way of the commandments: we must in all things conform to the holy will of God. By sin we become infirm, debilitated, sick of the palsy: we are unable to pursue our journey, until assisted by the mercy of God, we bring forth fruits worthy of penance: having been delivered from the misery of sin, we must by every means in our power, avoid that, the greatest of all evils; being ever mindful of the admonition given by our Redeemer, Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing happen to thee. Should we abuse the mercy of God, by relapsing into those sins for which we have been pardoned, what may we expect, but condign punishment for our base ingratitude. Should we depart from the path of virtue, can we hope to arrive at the kingdom of heaven? In imitation of the foolish virgins, we may, indeed, knock at the door and say, Lord, Lord, open to us, but, he answering, will say Amen I say to you, I know you not. Thus, whilst upon the one hand, we are encouraged through the mercy of God, to have recourse to him for the pardon of our sins, so on the other, we must studiously avoid returning like the dog to his vomit, or the sow which has been washed,

to her wallowing in the mire, lest unhappily we die in our sins.

Our Divine Master having given proofs of his power to heal the diseases of both our souls and bodies, the multitudes seeing it, feared and glorified God. Let us, Christians, fear his justice: let us glorify his mercy: let us tremble, lest we provoke a vindictive retribution: let us hear, whilst he himself speaks. I say unto you, be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will show you whom you shall fear: Fear ye him, who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell. Yea, I say to you, fear him. If we fear to offend the Almighty, we may hope to partake of his mercy; his peculiar, his glorious attribute, which he delights to dispense to the children of men. He has bestowed upon us many spiritual and temporal favors: he has empowered the priests of his Church, in his name, to say to the penitent sinner, Thy sins are forgiven thee: arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. He has replenished our souls with his grace: he has preserved us from innumerable dangers. Let us acknowledge, with hearts penetrated with sentiments of pious gratitude, his unbounded mercy: his unspeakable goodness. But let us beware, let us not be deceived; our gratitude must not consist in words alone, it must be evident in all our

actions. God looks with complacence upon a heart penetrated with a sense of its obligations to him; when we thus praise and glorify him, we may with confidence expect an increasing, an uninterrupted flow of Divine mercy: it is in this sense the words of our Redeemer are to be understood. Whosoever hath, to him shall be given. Let us so live as to hope we may hear him address us in the consoling language of the gospel, Be of good heart, thy sins are forgiven thee!

PRAYER.

Compassionate Redeemer of mankind! thou hadst pity on the man sick of the palsy!—thou didst restore him to health. Thou didst forgive him his sins. Have pity on me, O Lord! for I am afflicted with the palsy of sin: from which dreadful malady, thou only canst deliver me. O, Sovereign Physician of souls! say but the word, and health and strength will be restored to my sinful soul.

O, bountiful Jesus! thou hast often bestowed this thy unspeakable mercy upon me: frequently have I experienced thy clemency in the pardon of my sins: in the innumerable favors thou hast conferred upon me. May thy holy name be praised and glorified for ever. I will praise and glorify thee, O good and gracious God! Glory

be to thee, who art truly wonderful in the happy effects thou producest in penitent sinners. Glory be to thee, for the manifold graces thou hast communicated to me, the most unworthy of thy servants. Immeasurable is thy power, O Lord! how greatly should I fear thee. Infinite is thy mercy; how unboundedly should I love and praise thee.

Praise thou the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me, praise his holy name: and never forget all his mercies. Thus will I magnify the Lord, all my life: thus will I lift up my hands to his holy throne. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

NINETEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xxii. 1, 14.

At that time: Jesus spoke to the scribes and Pharisees in this parable, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king, who made a marriage for his son. And he sent his servants, to call them that were invited to the marriage: and they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying: Tell them that were invited: Be-

hold, I have prepared my dinner; my beeves and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come ye to the marriage. But they neglected, and went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. And the rest laid hands on his servants, and having treated them contumeliously, put them to death. But when the king had heard of it, he was angry, and sending his armies, he destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. Then he saith to his servants: The marriage indeed is ready; but they that were invited, were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find, call to the marriage. And his servants going forth into the ways, gathered together all they found, both bad and good: and the marriage was filled with guests. And the king went in to see the guests; and he saw there a man who had not on a wedding garment. And he saith to him: Friend, how camest thou in hither not having on a wedding garment? But he was silent. Then the king said to the waiters: Bind his hands and his feet, and cast him into the exterior darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.

INSTRUCTION.

In the gospel appointed for this day, we are instructed upon two important and fundamental

truths. The lesson is obvious: the application free from difficulty. This gospel tells us of the infinite goodness of God, who has invited all to happiness of heaven, represented by the marriage feast. It also shows the base ingratitude of those who despise his gracious invitation, and pronounces malediction upon all who presumptuously appear before him without a wedding garment. The last will form the subject for the present instruction.

The kingdom of heaven is proposed for our consideration, under the similitude of a marriage feast, to which none but those provided with a wedding garment, can hope to be admitted. By this nuptial garment, is understood charity, or the love of God—a white, an unspotted robe, with which those who are called to the spiritual nuptials of the Lamb, must be invested. Charity, or the love of God, is not to be considered as a single virtue, distinct from the others; but the chief, in which is included every moral goodness: an abridgment of every Christian duty.

The man who had not on a wedding garment, represents those much mistaken persons, who imagine that to have what they conceive to be faith, is a sufficient qualification to partake of the celestial banquet. That such Christians are much deceived, they may learn from the unhappy fate of the man, who had not on a wedding gar-

ment; who was bound hands and feet, and cast into exterior darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

If faith alone was sufficient to entitle us to enter the kingdom of heaven, would our Divine Redeemer have said to the lawyer, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments? Would the Apostle have assured us that faith without good works, is dead? The devils believe, and tremble, but what advantage do they derive from their dead faith? Thus writes St. Peter, and you, employing all care, minister in your faith virtue; and in virtue knowledge; and in knowledge abstinence; and in abstinence patience; and in patience Godliness; and in Godliness love of brotherhood, charity: that by good works you may make sure your calling and election. Then will we possess a faith working by love, perfected by charity.

The nuptial garment, (our conscience,) must be undefiled. Sin pollutes the soul; hence it becomes unworthy of the happiness for which it has been created. The least sin committed wilfully, renders us an object of God's aversion: consequently, every stain must be cleansed in the salutary waters of penance. Our Redeemer did not condemn the man for appearing among the guests without a garment, but for not being clothed in a wedding garment: in one suitable

to the dignity of the kingdom, and the magnificence of the entertainment to which he had been invited. Hence, we are admonished, that we must not only possess the robe of true faith, but it must be adorned with good works, that thus we may be acceptable to him, who has invited us to the marriage feast.

Let us therefore, devote our serious attention to the important truths delivered in the gospel for this day. Go ye therefore into the highways; and as many as you shall find call to the marriage. The poor, the lame, the blind, all are solicited to be happy: if any are excluded, they are those, who decline the gracious invitation, or who do not endeavor to acquire and practise the virtues, and perform the duties, required by the Christian dispensation. If they are rejected, nay, if they are cast into exterior darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, the consequences are to be attributed to themselves. God never requires of us, that which is impossible: his commands are not impracticable, nor difficult to be observed when assisted by divine grace, which he never withholds when solicited with a contrite, and humble heart; therefore, while we have time, and opportunity, let us do good, and thereby make our calling and election sure. Let us have our loins girt, that is our passions and inclinations under wholesome restraint:

let us have lamps in our hands, replenished with the oil of charity and good works: that when the King cometh we may be prepared to attend the marriage feast, we may be adorned with a wedding garment, and with the saints and angels for all eternity glorify God in the kingdom of Heaven.

PRAYER.

O, Jesus, my adorable master! how loving, how bountiful hast thou been to us! Thou hast prepared a royal banquet, of which thou hast solicited us to partake. Truly, thou hast done all things well! O, dear Redeemer! permit us not to refuse thy gracious invitation: excite in our souls an ardent desire to participate in the joys of thy banquet: suffer not the business, or pleasures of this world, to retard us for a moment from responding to thy call: let it be our supreme happiness to possess thee, as it will be our greatest misery to be deprived of thee.

My God! I presume to come, though deeply impressed with the conviction of my total unworthiness, but confiding in thy unbounded goodness and mercy. O, suffer me not, dear Lord! to approach thee unprepared: adorn my soul with the spotless garments of Divine Charity: assist me to love thee, my God, above all things, and my neighbor as myself. O, Lord! I ardently desire to be a partaker of the delicious banquet

thou hast prepared for those who love thee, that being strengthened thereby, I may be enabled to exclaim with the Apostle of Nations, who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation or distress or famine or nakedness or danger or persecution or the sword? For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

TWENTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*John* iv. 46, 53.

At that time: There was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Jesus therefore said to him: Unless you see signs and wonders, you believe not. The ruler saith to him: Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith to him: Go thy way, thy son liveth. The man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. And as he was going

down, his servants met him; and they brought word, saying, that his son lived. He asked therefore of them the hour wherein he grew better. And they said to him: yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that it was at the same hour that Jesus said to him: Thy son liveth · and himself believed, and his whole house.

INSTRUCTION.

Prosperity seldom produces a sincere love of God. The reason is plain: it generates an attachment to the world: whilst adversity teaches the important maxim, that to be truly happy, we must seek happiness from God alone. Adversity withdraws our affections from the goods of this life, by exhibiting the uncertainty of their duration, and the many accidents by which we may be deprived of them. Thus our misfortunes, our afflictions, frequently prove instrumental in compelling us to have recourse to God, and although attended with some difficulty, yet oftentimes that which was commenced from urgent necessity may terminate in the happy choice to remain attached to his holy service. Hence, the designs of the Almighty are made manifest, by detaching us from the criminal pursuits of the world; he conducts us to himself, and he removes those impediments which obstruct our progress in the at-

tainment of true happiness. God frequently interrupts, nay often deprives us of our imaginary happiness: that we may become sensible of the dangers to which we had been exposed. He knows full well that an uninterrupted prosperity too frequently leads to a forgetfulness of our duty to God, to a neglect of the salvation of our immortal souls, to a total disregard for our eternal happiness. As one acquainted with all our maladies, God obliges us to have recourse to him: as a prudent, and skilful physician, he does not consider what may be agreeable, but that which may be profitable, and he applies those remedies which he knows are most conducive to our welfare.

Let us imitate the conduct of the "Ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. He having heard that Jesus was come from Judea into Galilee, went to him, and prayed him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. From the solicitude evinced by this Ruler, it is manifest, that he had a paternal affection for his child: that he apprehended a fatal result from the violence of his fever: and that the possibility of losing him, was an interruption to those pleasures he had hitherto enjoyed. Were it not, that his son was at the point of death it is more than probable, he would have never heard that Jesus, was come from Judea into Galilee! But, on beholding his child about to expire, he had recourse

to the compassionate Jesus! He prayed him to come down, and heal his son. Our merciful Redeemer, yielded to the pressing solicitations of the afflicted parent. Go thy way, thy son liveth: the man believed the word which Jesus said to him, and went his way. Here let us admire the wonderful economy of God's providence. The Ruler in going to Jesus, only expected to save the temporal life of his child, it proved the happy occasion of bringing spiritual life to himself and to his family.

Our Savior had been in Cana of Galilee: he had preached his gospel in Capharnaum: he had wrought the most stupendous miracles: nevertheless, few of the rich, or those of exalted rank, believed in him. His fame had indeed, reached the ears of this Ruler, who then disregarded it. But when afflicted in the person of his son, his thoughts revert to Jesus: he meditates upon all he had heard: he immediately resolves to have recourse to him and as a result, himself believed, and his whole house.

God frequently makes himself known to us by the ministers of his Church. We daily hear of him, and what he taught with regard to the important affair of our salvation: but alas! like the Ruler, we are unmindful of the manifold favors bestowed upon us. The occupations of a worldly life: the visionary enjoyments of its delusive

pleasures, engage all our attention, until we are overtaken by some calamity; then like the Ruler, we become sensible of our alarming situation; then we have recourse to Jesus, from whom we shall receive abundant consolation, provided we are animated with the requisite dispositions.

The design of the Almighty, in permitting misfortunes and afflictions to overtake us, is to attach us to himself; to withdraw us from the world. Certain it is that we must seek for the alleviation of our sorrows at the feet of our compassionate Redeemer: we must cast all our cares upon him. It were vain to seek a remedy amidst the sinful pleasures of the world. The faithful Christian contemplates in every adversity, a benevolent monitor, who informs him, that Jesus is come down from Judea into Galilee. Imitating the example of the Ruler, he approaches him by reflection; he investigates with great exactitude his past life, to discover if any irregularity, or particular sin may have provoked the Divine indignation to visit him in his anger. Should he perceive that he has offended his heavenly Father, he prostrates himself before him and repeats the words of the Royal Psalmist: To thee only, O, Lord! have I sinned, and done evil in thy sight, that thou mayest be justified in thy words, and mayest overcome when thou art judged. But even if unconscious of any deviation from the

path of rectitude, he humbly adores, he patiently submits to the paternal chastisements of the Almighty: he looks on the face of his suffering Christ; he is impressed with the conviction, that in our patience we shall possess our souls: that our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly, an eternal weight of glory. If with similar dispositions we have recourse to him in all our difficulties, we will mercifully obtain the assistance we require: meanwhile, let us implore his grace, to enable us to do that which he commands: to suffer what he permits: as it is through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.

PRAYER.

O, Sovereign Lord! how good, how bountiful art thou! Thy ears are always open to hear our prayers: thou art always disposed to grant our petitions: thou dost even exceed our expectations in the multitude of the graces thou bestowest on us: thou art our Physician and our life: through thee, we live; deprived of thee, we die.

Thou inexhaustible source of mercy! to whom shall we have recourse but to thee, O Lord! Penetrated with humility, and confiding in thy goodness, I presume to implore thee, in behalf of my poor soul, which through sin is dangerously ill: speak, dear Lord, and my soul shall be

healed: say to me as thou saidst to the Ruler, go, thy soul livest! then shall I be made whole: then will I praise, then will I glorify thy holy name.

If accumulated misfortunes are necessary to bring me to thee, O, Jesus! I submit to thy merciful dispensations. I bow, I humbly adore thy gracious appointment: having been assured by the Apostle of Nations, that through many tribulations, we shall enter the kingdom of heaven.

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xviii. 23, 35.

At that time: Jesus spoke to his disciples this parable: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a king who would take an account of his servants. And when he had begun to take the account, one was brought to him that owed him ten thousand talents. And as he had not wherewith to pay it, his lord commanded that he should be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. But that servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me and I will pay thee all. And the lord of that servant being moved with pity, let him go and forgave him the debt. But when that servant

was gone out, he found one of his fellow-servants that owed him a hundred pence; and laying hold of him, he throttled him saying: pay what thou owest. And his fellow-servant falling down, besought him, saying: Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he paid the debt. Now his fellow-servants seeing what was done, were very much grieved, and they came and told their lord all that was done. Then his lord called him, and said to him: Thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all the debt, because thou besoughtest me: shouldst not thou then have had compassion also on thy fellow-servant, even as I had compassion on thee? And his lord being angry, delivered him to the torturers, until he paid all the debt. So also shall my heavenly Father do to you, if you forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.

INSTRUCTION.

The unbounded mercy of God is forcibly displayed in the gospel of this day: but whilst it communicates consolation, it penetrates us with a salutary apprehension, lest we abuse the multiplied favors of our heavenly Father. A king having called his servants to an account, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; not being able to pay so large a sum, he,

his wife, children, and all he had were ordered to be sold; but the servant falling down, besought his master saying, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. The king had compassion upon him, let him go and forgave him the debt. What an admirable scene is here presented for our contemplation! Can we reflect upon the unhappy situation of this poor man and his family, without feeling the strongest emotions of commiseration for his wretched condition? He has no remedy but one: he appeals to the bounty of his injured king. He falls at his feet: he implores him to have patience, and he will pay him all. He not only obtains what he solicits, but more than he requires; for he sought but for a little time, when behold, his benevolent prince forgives him all the debt! Magnificent representation of the bounty of God: of his unbounded mercy to all penitent sinners. When the Almighty beholds us prostrate before him, unable of ourselves to perform the least good, he regards our sighs, our tears, our contrite and humble hearts; he pardons our manifold transgressions, he desires us go in peace and sin no more. Truly, may every sinner exclaim, the mercy of the Lord is above all his works! What can give us a more exalted idea of the infinite mercy, and patience of God, than the consideration of his forbearance; with what tenderness he solicits; with what patience

he awaits the return of the sinner. If we contemplate the great number of those who defile the earth by the enormity of their sins; if we draw a portrait of the corruption of mankind, what a torrent of iniquity will be presented to our view? Did we possess even a ray of divine knowledge to penetrate the inmost recesses of the human heart, what a picture would we there behold? how admirable would appear the infinite patience of God, who for so many ages has borne the insults of a wicked world, the base ingratitude of his creatures, whom he continually solicits to depart from their evil ways; hence it was that the Prophet Jeremias exclaimed: It is the mercy of the Lord, that we are not consumed, because his compassion fails not! How often has he not called upon each of us to return to him? how numerous the opportunities he has afforded us; how often has he exhorted us by his ministers? how frequently has he spoken to us by the admonitions of our own conscience? sometimes endeavoring to reclaim us by the threats of divine justice, at others, with the affection of a most tender parent, he sweetly entreats us with promises of infinite mercy.

As God is our supreme Sovereign, he will call each of us to an account: have we not abundant reason to apprehend that we will be found greatly indebted to him? If in the sacrament of pen-

ance, upon our humble supplication, he generously forgives our former debts, we must carefully avoid contracting new obligations. This is a matter of much more importance than many seem to be sensible of; for, do we not see numbers falling at the feet of their Divine Master, asking pardon, and promising amendment: but do all these really, endeavor to amend? are there not those, who soon forget the favor they have received, the promises which they have made? Should not such of us as are relapsing sinners tremble lest we abuse the mercy of our God, lest by the turpitude of our conduct, we provoke the justice of the Almighty to exact payment of our entire debt. When through the sacrament of penance we have become reconciled to him, we must diligently endeavor to correct our faults, fulfil our good purposes, and amend our lives. To each of us, our Redeemer thus addresses himself, go, and sin no more.

Our Divine Master has given us an exposition of the clemency we ought to show to our neighbor. Inasmuch as we have received mercy from God, we should impart it to each other. Unless we forgive one another, we cannot expect forgiveness from God: this portion of the gospel is of the utmost importance to every individual: it demands our most serious attention.

PRAYER.

O, my God! my Sovereign Lord! have mercy on me, prostrate at thy sacred feet. I humbly implore thee, to have patience with me. I confess that I am greatly indebted to thy justice: grant me thy grace that I may sincerely labor to make some atonement for my past transgressions: enable me to serve thee more faithfully for the future. Have compassion on me, and say to my soul, thy sins are forgiven thee. I tremble, O Lord! when I contemplate the rigor of thy justice. I fly to the extended arms of thy mercy. Thy delight is to show clemency to the sons of men. I will hope to receive the pardon of my sins, and I firmly purpose never to offend thee hereafter.

But, adorable Jesus! whilst thus I invoke thy mercy for myself, let me ever recollect, thou hast promised to do unto me, as I do unto my neighbor: thou hast commanded me to love him, and to forgive him, as often as he shall offend me. I give thee thanks for this holy, this just command: for the love of thee, I sincerely, and from my heart forgive all those who have in any way injured or offended me: enable me, O God! to eradicate from my heart every sentiment of anger, hatred, or malice, that I may live and die in perfect charity with all mankind: forgive, dear

Lord! those who have injured me, and pardon me my manifold offences. O, that the spirit of perfect charity may ever reign in our hearts, that we may ardently love thee, O, God! and sincerely love one another.

TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xxii. 15, 21.

At that time: The Pharisees going, consulted among themselves how to ensnare him in his speech. And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou dost not regard the persons of men. Tell us therefore what thou dost think, is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar or not? But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me the coin or the tribute. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: Whose image and inscription is this? They say to him Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: and to God, the things that are God's.

INSTRUCTIONS.

The practical instructions given in the gospel for this day, demand our serious consideration. The Pharisees thus addressed our Divine Redeemer: Master, we know that thou art a true speaker and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man. For thou dost not regard the persons of men. Notwithstanding the insidious designs of the Pharisees to ensnare our Redeemer, they were obliged to proclaim to the world the innocence of his life, and the purity of his doctrine. In his own divine person, he has given a brilliant example for every Christian to imitate. The glory of God, the welfare of others, should be the object of all our actions, particularly of those who are called to the sacred ministry, who must teach and preach the word of God in truth and perfect purity, not seeking to please men, but the Almighty, so to fulfil the work of their ministry as to be approved by God, to do good to be rich in good works, to give easily, to communicate to others. Every true Christian must be a sincere lover of truth; his life must be regulated by the maxims of the gospel, without regard to the fear of offending, or the desire of pleasing others; he must ever walk in the paths of truth and equity, courageously professing our holy

faith, and the practice of every virtue, as our dear Redeemer has assured us, that: Every one who shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven: but he who shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before my Father who is in heaven—hence, to the profession of our belief, must be added the practice of every Christian duty.

The Pharisees, and many of the Jews, held it to be unlawful to pay tribute to Cæsar. They, therefore, send their disciples to Jesus, to inquire if the demand was legal they flattered themselves with the hope that his reply would render him obnoxious to the rulers, or to the people. But the wise man has said, There is no wisdom or counsel against the Lord. Our divine Redeemer with admirable prudence defeated their impious design; covered with shame and confusion, they returned, totally discomfited. Had he replied that it was lawful, they would have proclaimed him an enemy to the liberty and property of the people: if he had answered that it was unjust, they would have denounced him as an enemy to the State. But Jesus knowing their wickedness, said: Why do you tempt me, ye hypocrites? Show me a piece of tribute-money. And they offered him a penny. And Jesus saith to them: whose image and inscription is this? They say to him, Cæsar's. Then he saith to them: Ren-

der therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; and to God the things that are God's.

Whose image is this that has been stamped upon our immortal souls? is a question upon which every Christian should frequently and solemnly meditate: we must admit, it is the likeness of God. Whose inscription is this? We behold it in characters indelibly imprinted upon the most noble of our faculties; our will, our memory, and our understanding. We belong to God alone. Neither Cæsar, nor the world, should have any dominion over us. How careful should we be to preserve the image of the Almighty undefiled: to guard his inscription with the most scrupulous fidelity. We belong to God alone we must not become the slaves of his implacable enemies, the devil, the world, and the flesh.

God has given us a will wherein the divine image evidently appears: by this faculty, we are enabled to determine with perfect freedom the choice we may make between eternal happiness, or endless misery: the supereminence of this power appears in this, that our happiness depends in a great measure upon ourselves, inasmuch as no man is miserable by necessity, but becomes so by the perversion of his will. What a glorious privilege to be thus as it were likened unto God; to partake in some degree of the divine perfections!

God has given us a memory, which enables us to contemplate him, as our great Creator. By this noble faculty, we retain what we hear, what we are taught; that we may ever bear in mind the object of our creation, and place our entire dependance upon the Almighty. Whatever we possess is from him alone, the work of whose hands we are. It is impossible to employ our memory without being reminded whose image we bear, whose inscription has been stamped upon us.

God has given us an understanding, whereby we are enabled to comprehend the duties we owe to him. It is by this faculty we are distinguished from the brute creation: by this power we reflect and reason. When we know the end for which we were created, we conclude it is our duty to obey the law of God and that to deviate therefrom, would be to endanger our eternal salvation. By this faculty we comprehend the great duties of a Christian life, we know how to regulate our actions; how to avoid evil, and follow good; how to discern between things that are temporal, and those that are eternal; how much more desirable the permanent happiness of heaven is, than the fleeting possession of the things of this world: these acts of the understanding sufficiently demonstrate whose image we bear, whose inscription has been stamped upon us.

These being the tenets of every faithful Christian, let us henceforth dedicate ourselves to the service, and observance of the law of God: let every power of our souls be employed to praise, to serve, and glorify him. Our will in loving him. Our memory in reflecting upon him. Our understanding in learning, and performing our duty with perfect fidelity. God having made us after his own image and likeness, to love and serve him faithfully here, it is in his service every Christian should be employed who hopes to participate in the joys of the kingdom of heaven; thus we shall render unto God the things that are God's.

PRAYER.

Dear Redeemer! Mirror of purity: source of truth: teach me, how I may serve thee with sincerity: confirm me with thy holy grace, that regardless of what others may say of me, I may pursue a steady course of virtue, and perfect love of thee. O, God! Thou hast made me, after thine own image. Thou hast given me the noble faculties of will, memory, and understanding. Thou hast given me a will to love thee: a memory to be ever recollected in thee: an understanding to know, and serve thee. May I love thee with all my heart, with all my mind, with all my strength, may I desire to know but thee, O, my God! and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

TWENTY-THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* ix. 18, 26.

At that time: As Jesus was speaking to the multitude: Behold a certain ruler came up, and adored him, saying: Lord, my daughter is even now dead; but come lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus rising up followed him, with his disciples. And behold a woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only his garment, I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour. And when Jesus was come into the house of the ruler, and saw the minstrels and the multitude making a rout, he said: Give place: for the girl is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. And when the multitude was put forth, he went in and took her by the hand. And the maid arose. And the fame hereof went abroad into all that country.

INSTRUCTION.

Our Redeemer was solicited by a ruler of the Synagogue, to go down to his house, to heal his daughter who lay at the point of death. Christ complied with his desire, and when he came to the house he found the girl dead, but taking her by the hand he restored her to life. As Jesus was going to the ruler's house, a woman who had been troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment. For she said within herself. If I shall touch only his garment I shall be healed. But Jesus turning and seeing her, said: Be of good heart, daughter, thy faith hast made thee whole. Saint Luke informs us, that this poor woman had bestowed all her substance on physicians, and could not be healed by any. She had recourse to Jesus Christ: her faith told her that if she but touched the hem of his garment she should be healed. Daughter, said the compassionate Jesus, thy faith hath made thee whole, go thy way in peace.

How many nowadays imitate the afflicted women? how many there are who spend all their substance in search of happiness which is not to be found in a world sated in wickedness. Let us consider that in this world true

happiness is not to be found : that God alone is perfect felicity.

Man born of a woman, living a short time, is filled with many miseries. That we are subject to many miseries in this world, is sufficiently obvious : yet, there are those to whom it appears otherwise, who being exempt from the privations attendant upon poverty, and partaking of the false pleasures of this life, become the willing dupes of the world ; but were these persons to investigate the subject, they would find a gross delusion had been practised upon them. To pass over the corporal afflictions to which we are all subject, let us consider the far greater calamities of the mind, arising from our inordinate passions, which the more they are indulged the more they desire : their efforts produce fatigue, disappointment, and anxiety : thus is the mind deprived of every solid happiness.

Who is there that says he is rich enough ? who that does not desire more ? How few, who are content with what they possess ? How many, who have but little, imagine they would be happy if they had but a little more ? To obtain the object of their desires, their thoughts, their anxious days and restless nights, are employed in striving after wealth : and when procured, the ruling passion predominates : it desires abundance, nor is it at a loss for specious pretexts to gratify

its cupidity: and generally, those who possess abundance, are desirous to increase it, that they may have it in their power to indulge their propensities without control.

Should ambition, or pleasure, be our ruling passion, how seldom is it restrained within the bounds of moderation! Pride, which makes us ambitious of distinction, incites us to proceed, but we should check its progressive desires. Pleasures, which have been indulged, satiate and the mind is continually exercised in the pursuit of new gratifications, which like the former soon grow insipid: and as new pleasures must be supplied, fresh trouble and anxiety succeed each other. It is in vain we seek for happiness in the riches, honors, or pleasures of this world: in vain we seek for true, for permanent happiness but in the service of God.

Following the precepts of our Divine Master, we are enabled to subdue our passions with the assistance of his grace, which he grants to us by prayer, and the sacraments. The humility taught by the gospel is a sovereign antidote against the poison of pride. Poverty of spirit inculcated by Jesus Christ and his disciples, as it limits our desires for the things of this world, so it makes us content with the station wherein we are placed, and consequently exempts us from the anxiety and solicitude inseparable from an

inordinate love of riches. By it we are protected from the dangerous occasions to which an irregular desire of wealth exposes us, and having a competence of food and raiment, we possess that true happiness, that peace of mind, which is not to be purchased with the wealth of the universe. May the consideration of these important truths, produce a salutary impression upon our minds: an evident influence on our conduct: if hitherto, our time has been devoted to the world, without being healed by any, let us now abandon it as an empty cheat: let us go to Jesus; let us love him as the only object deserving our attentions. In his service, we will find a remedy for all our evils: assistance in the hour of distress: consolation in affliction: security against the fear of death: and a rational hope of eternal felicity in the kingdom of heaven.

PRAYER.

To whom shall we have recourse for an effectual remedy for the multiplied disorders of our souls, but to thee O, Jesus! the inexhaustible source of all good? Too long have we sought for it, amidst the fascination of a deceitful world: too long have we been the slaves of ungovernable passions, of inordinate inclinations: alas! too long have we lived the willing victims of sin. It

is time we should arise from the unhappy lethargy through which we have become unmindful of our eternal interests, and insensible of thy unbounded mercy.

We will arise, O dear Redeemer! we will go to thee, the only Physician of our souls: if we can touch the hem of thy garment, we shall be made whole. Say unto us, dear Lord! as thou didst to the afflicted woman, Be of good heart. Assist us with thy divine grace during our mortal career, and when the hour arrives when time shall be no more for us, replenish our souls with every virtue, that each of us may hope to hear from thee those consoling words, Thy faith hath made thee whole, go thy way in peace.

TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST.

GOSPEL.—*Matt.* xxiv. 15–35.

At that time: Jesus said to his disciples: When you shall see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place: he that readeth, let him understand. Then they that are in Judea, let them flee to the mountains; and he that is on the house-top let him not come down to take any

thing out of his house: and he that is in the field, let him not go back to take his coat. And wo to them that are with child, and that give suck in those days. But pray that your flight be not in the winter, or on the Sabbath. For there shall be then great tribulation, such as hath not been from the beginning of the world until now, neither shall be. And unless those days had been shortened, no flesh should be saved: but for the sake of the elect, those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say to you: Lo here is Christ, or there: do not believe him: For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch as to deceive (if possible) even the elect. Behold I have told it you, beforehand. If therefore they shall say to you: Behold he is in the desert; go ye not out: Behold he is in the closets, believe it not. For as lightning cometh out of the east, and appeareth even into the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Wheresoever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together. And immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be moved: and there shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all tribes of the earth mourn: and

they shall see the Son of Man, coming in the clouds of heaven with much power and majesty. And he shall send his angels with a trumpet, and a great voice: and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the farthest parts of the heavens to the utmost bounds of them. And from the fig-tree learn a parable: when the branch thereof is now tender, and the leaves come forth, you know that summer is nigh. So you also, when you shall see all these things, know ye that it is nigh even at the doors. Amen, I say to you, that this generation shall not pass till these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass, but my words shall not pass.

INSTRUCTION.

How pathetically does the Redeemer foretell the destruction of the Jewish people. His predictions were fulfilled during the siege of Jerusalem, under Titus, the son of Vespasian the Roman Emperor. Amid the horrors incident to such a calamitous event, was to be seen the abomination of desolation spoken of by the Prophet Daniel; when the Holy of Holies, or interior part of the temple was defiled: the temple itself destroyed: the city laid in ruins: and its wicked inhabitants either put to the sword, or carried into slavery.

The children of Israel had been the special favorites of the Almighty. He had blessed them above all other nations of the earth. He had replenished them with many special graces. He had chosen them to be his privileged people, and he had declared to the world, that he was their Lord, and their God.

If we inquire into the cause which led to the destruction of this once highly favored people, the holy writers will inform us, that they were a stiff-necked, and perverse generation: who wilfully and incessantly disobeyed the Almighty. They had frequently rejected, and murdered his Prophets. They despised, insulted, and with savage ferocity had crucified upon an ignominious cross, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. They had invoked heaven, that his blood might be upon them, and upon their children!

In the ruin of the Jewish nation, we behold a dreadful vial of divine wrath, poured upon an obstinate and a wicked people. The same rule which the justice of God observes towards nations, is also followed with regard to individuals. To wilful and obstinate sinners; to those who despise his mercy, who reject his invitation to repent, who persevere in the violation of his holy commandments; to these, the Almighty announces the destruction that will come upon them. Now is the time in which all sinners are

sweetly invited to participate in the mercy of God. The day of Justice, that great and bitter day, will also arrive, when the Almighty will speak in the wrath of thunder to the impenitent sinner. Oh! that men were wise, that they would provide for their last end, that they would consider what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!

On the Day of the Lord, what excessive tribulation will surround every sinner! In the hour of death, the body will be tormented with agony at its approaching dissolution! But the soul, oh! how intense the anguish arising from the reproaches of a guilty conscience? Having a perfect knowledge of good and evil, then it is, that the burden of sin becomes insupportable: when the unfortunate sinner who had resisted the inspirations of God, who had rejected the repeated admonitions of his servants, when apprised that his mortal career is nearly terminated, what trouble, what anxiety, what horror penetrates his soul! If he reviews his past life, he beholds it consumed in the perpetration of innumerable sins, the enormity of which, with the suggestions of the devil, tempt him to despair. Whatever he had heard of death, judgment, hell, or heaven, present new torments to his afflicted mind. Alas! this is that dreadful day: this is that terrible desolation which will overtake impenitent

sinners. Is a priest sent to prepare him for death and judgment, what consolation can the minister of religion impart to one, who has during his life derided the sacred order, despised their salutary admonitions, and contemptuously rejected the truths of religion? The priest may, (without doubt he will), exhort him to acts of contrition for his sins, and to confess them. Alas! unhappy creature, acts of devotion are altogether unknown to him: he knows not how: he is unable to raise his heart to God: it has been too eagerly engaged in the things of the world. The priest shows him a crucifix, he entreats him to place his entire confidence in the merits of the passion and death of our Savior: but the poor sinner has never lived as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and what confidence can he then have, whilst surrounded with all the horrors of a guilty conscience. It would be happy for such, did they make a proper use even of the time that yet remains: but alas! the anguish and terror that then afflict them, cause them to despair. In this state the sinner dies: he departs in a manner the most unhappy: because a retrospect of his past life can give him no consolation, and in the future he beholds but a miserable eternity. This should not discourage the dying sinner; for whilst it exhibits to his view, the extreme folly of dying in enmity with the Almighty, he has declared by his Prophet, that in whatever hour a

sinner shall be converted, he shall save his soul, and live: yet, the Redeemer told the obstinate Jews, that they should seek him, and should not find him, and that they should die in their sins. Has not every sinner reason to apprehend that this may be his case? that whilst deferring his conversion, he may neither have the time, nor the dispositions to perform it effectually?

Happy those, who make a holy use of the favorable opportunities which are granted them to prepare for death: to these, the approach of their last hour, and the coming of Christ, is a subject of inexpressible exultation: their hope is laid up, that they will receive the recompense of a virtuous life, and that they will be mercifully delivered from the anguish which will overwhelm the obstinate and impenitent sinner at the moment of death, and in the day of judgment.

PRAYER.

Merciful Redeemer! grant that these important truths may make a salutary impression upon our hearts, that we may assiduously provide for our departure from this world, and that we may find mercy at thy hands when thou shalt come to exercise judgment and justice upon mankind. O, dear Lord! let us die the death of the just, and let our last end be like unto theirs!

Forgive our manifold offences, and for the time yet to come, let us dread nothing so much as to offend thee. Enter not, O Lord! into judgment with thy servant; for no man living shall be justified in thy sight: enable us by thy divine grace to judge ourselves by a daily examination; that we may avoid every occasion of sin; make all the atonement in our power; and, in the spirit of a contrite and humble heart, hope to hear from thee at our last moment, this consoling sentence, Enter into the joy of thy Lord.

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Short Instructions for Lent.

In "The Regulations for Lent," Rt. Rev. Bishop Shanahan has recommended this book for study during Lent.

We regret that this volume of Short Instructions for Lent did not reach us earlier in the season so that our readers among the clergy and the Catholic sisterhoods could have had a copy of it by them during the Lenten season. It is in many ways the best book of its kind that we have seen. Three-quarters of a century have passed since the first edition was exhausted, and for some mysterious reason it has never been reprinted. The present editor, the Rev. Father Conklin, is deserving of great credit for discerning its real value and giving it a new lease of life.

What pleases us most in this series of meditations is the solidity of doctrine and the naturalness of the moral applications. In too many of our meditation books, sentiment takes the place of doctrine, and the piety which results therefrom is one of smiles and tears, a form of piety seldom profitable to the Christian soul.

To those of our readers who are not familiar with the intimate relationship that should exist between doctrine and piety, we can do no better than to send them to the pages of this well-printed volume. In language whose simplicity is closely akin to that of Holy Writ, the author of these meditations analyzes the Gospels that are read daily in the Missal during the forty days of Lent, and presents to the devout soul innumerable thoughts to stimulate the will and understanding to higher endeavors in the pursuit of Christian virtue.

We must compliment the Christian Press on the excellent character of this volume. The low price at which it sells its books shows us that at last we have in our country a Catholic publishing house which does not seek to make fabulous profits on its publications.—Rt. Rev. Bishop Delaney in *The Guidon.*

These "Short Instructions for Lent" bring vividly before all minds, particularly those which have allowed themselves to become inattentive, the obligations which the earnest Christian owes to God and his religion. For each weekday during the Lenten season an instruction is given, preceded by the Gospel of that day's Mass, from which the lessons are drawn, and followed by a prayer. Each instruction and each prayer bears the impress of a devout mind. They are sober and practical and free from that emotionalism and lack of restraint in words which are often noticeable in books of a like character. To both priests and people this volume will be in many ways acceptable. The priest will find in it hints for sermons. Religious and others who make daily meditations may use it as a help in mental prayer. For, as the editor points out in his preface, with very little effort the instructions may be divided into at least two points, and the prayer which is found at the end of each instruction would serve as a spiritual bouquet which might be called to mind from time to time during the day. The fact that the instructions are drawn directly from the Gospel and in many parts are largely made up of quotations from the inspired narratives, lends to them that sweetness and simplicity invariably found in devotional writings that hold closely to the words and spirit of the Evangelists.—*American Ecclesiastical Review.*

"Meditations for Every Day in Lent," is the title of a book just published, which is receiving much commendation, and the authorship of which is accredited to the Rev. William Conklin, associate rector of the Church of St. Mary, in Long Island City. This little book which is most appropriate for both the clergy and laity, is highly commended by the various critics of the diocese.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

"Instructions and Meditations on the Gospel for Each Day in Lent," edited by the Rev. William T. Conklin. A book suggestive to the young preacher and valuable to the pious Christian who remembers that during Lent, he must not only mortify his flesh according to his condition, but that he must pray more and reflect more than at other times on spiritual things. In this book, he will familiarize himself with the Word of God and with approved explanations and eminently practical applications of it.—*Catholic Standard and Times.*

SHORT INSTRUCTIONS FOR LENT.

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Priests and others will find the instructions in this book will serve as excellent meditations, and many who find themselves unable to assist at the regular Lenten sermons in the Church, will find this book almost invaluable.—*Freeman's Journal.*

The "Short Instructions for Lent" contains 312 pages and is neatly bound in cloth.

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